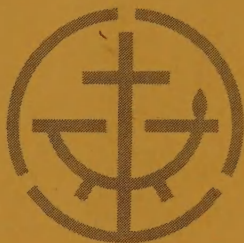


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*The Diary of a
Minister's Wife
Anna C. S. Droke*





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He has a habit of . . . dropping in here just as the whistle
is blowing for noon.

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THE DIARY OF A MINISTER'S WIFE

BY
ANNA E. S. DROKE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
GEORGE AVISON



NEW YORK: EATON & MAINS
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Santa Monica Methodist

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I

HOME, OCTOBER 1, 1885. It is said that it is the unexpected which happens. This saying surely proved true in my case, for nothing more unexpected could have happened than that I should be a minister's wife. It all came about through Tom, though Charles insists that Tom was only the human instrument—and a mighty unsophisticated one at that—and that the whole matter was foreordained. Be that as it may, I, Lucy Gordon that was, am henceforth to be known as "Sister Sherwood," and all my family and near friends are holding their breath, metaphorically speaking, lest I do something to disgrace the cult and bring my husband to shame.

I will say this for my family: I believe they, individually and collectively, did all within their power to make Charles see the error of his judgment; and as for me, I told him and told him that I was positive that I was never intended for anything so important as a minister's wife, and that I didn't know the least little thing about

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conducting prayer meetings and the Ladies' Aid, or any such things.

I knew I didn't, because one time in college, when they were holding a revival, the young ladies had prayer meeting every evening in Literary Hall, and when it came my time to lead I just could not think of *one thing* to say; so after I had read the fourteenth chapter of John, I asked all the girls to kneel in silent prayer. But as soon as we had knelt Olivia helped me out. Olivia was foreordained for a minister's wife. She's going to marry one and go to India (I believe it is) as a missionary. I was never very intimate with Olivia. She never approved of me; but some of the girls who knew her better did not speak very highly of her manners. They said she wanted to run everything, but I always thought that she was only practicing, because, knowing that a great deal would be expected of her, she naturally wanted to prepare. She could make a beautiful prayer, and she did that time. Of course I felt awfully sinful and mean because I had shirked my duty and left it for her to do. However, I felt better after Miss Montague had spoken. Miss Montague was taking a postgraduate course and tutoring in the prep, but she always joined with the girls in everything. After Olivia had prayed, Miss Montague made a talk. She told us that prayer is desire, and that we may

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not always be able to voice our desires in audible words, but that the Lord looketh on the heart. Then she read us what Jesus said about going into our closets and praying to our Father who sees in secret. She said going into our closets did not necessarily mean going into a room, but shutting the door of our hearts to all outside influences and communing with God. She told us that we could do that at any time and anywhere. After she was through I felt easier in my mind, and I think all the other girls felt so too, unless it was Olivia. She says the proof of real heartfelt religion is to be always ready to "testify."

Having had Olivia for a pattern, of course I did not feel that I would do at all for such a position, and I told Charles so. I told him he needed one like Olivia, but he said ministers' wives were not all cut after the same pattern, and that he was perfectly sure he should never care for one of the Olivia style. He said he was not choosing a wife for the parish but for himself, and that he wanted just me. I really felt very frightened, and I know mother did, although it would have been a great burden lifted off her poor shoulders if she could have felt that I could meet the requirements, because, you see, I was something of a problem. Mother is a widow, and we have been in "moderate circumstances"

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ever since I can remember. I do not know just what that may mean to other people, but to us it has meant only one new dress a season, and two new hats a year; also that Emily and I could not both go to college at once.

Will has been through medical college a year, and is a fullfledged physician with a shingle and several prominent patients, so mother has checked him off her list of worries. Tom is studying law, and Emily was to have a thorough course in music as soon as I was through college, and I—well, I was mother's problem.

I am neither talented nor beautiful (Emily is both), neither am I considered practical, whatever that may mean. After due deliberation and counsel on the part of my family and friends, it was finally decided that I should teach. Have you ever noticed that the knotty problem in the family "bunch" is invariably consigned to this dump-heap? I don't think it was ever decided just what I was to teach, but when I was still in public school I used to lie awake nights wondering if I should ever be able to teach "cube root" and the "rule of three."

But I am not telling a thing about how I came to be a minister's wife instead of a teacher. As I said before, it was through Tom, humanly speaking. He was at the university studying law and I was in my last year at college. We both

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went home for the Christmas vacation. I got home a day ahead of Tom and was astonished when mother told me he had written asking permission to bring a friend. She wanted me to read the letter and see if I could interpret it, because she says she can't understand more than half we mean since we've stopped writing English.

Tom said his friend was a "bib," but that he was all right just the same. Then down toward the close he said, "Tell the girls to plan for a good time, for Charlie is a mighty jolly old 'log.'" Mother couldn't imagine what such ridiculous terms might mean, but I told her that I suspected they pertained to some sort of society. However, when Will came and I showed the letter to him, he said: "Why the fellow's a preacher. 'Bib' stands for 'biblical student'; 'log' is short for 'theologian.'"

When we had received this enlightenment you may be sure we were distressed, and felt sure that Tom had taken leave of his senses, for he certainly knew what a strain it was upon the family when we entertained the minister and his wife to tea once a year. And then to think of having one in the house two whole weeks—well!

However, what couldn't be cured must be endured, so we got busy. All the while Emily and I were helping mother with the extra baking

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and boiling and stewing, I was hoping that he would not question me on the catechism, as Dr. Harmon used to do.

When we had everything in order, mother brought the big family Bible and put it on the table in the living room, so as to have it handy for prayers—you are not to think by this that we are not religious, because we are, and I think my mother reads her Bible more than anyone I ever saw—but not the “family” one; that is only for the sake of ornament, and to keep the record of births and deaths and marriages in.

When all this preparation was finished Aunt Jane came over. She insisted on bringing the “Family Tree” and putting it in a conspicuous place—she is always so afraid strangers may class our gentility with the parlor carpet, which is getting decidedly shabby—but mother wouldn’t hear to it. Mother is so different from Aunt Jane; she says that having had noble ancestors is just like having gained a reputation—it is just that much more to live up to, and entails that much more responsibility upon us. Mother never will let us shirk anything.

We were all ready and sitting around as prim and precise as “papa, potatoes, prunes, and prisms” when we heard the train come in. Will had gone down to meet it. Mother had on her black silk. It had been turned upside down and

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inside out and hind side before, but it looked beautiful, or, rather, she looked beautiful in it, with her pretty gray hair all soft and fluffy and a collar of real lace. Emily wore a house dress of red merino and was really striking. I think she wore it because she knew it looked so well with her dark hair and eyes. I am a sort of washed-out blond; I don't look so very well in anything, but I wore that day a pale blue cashmere that had seen much service as an evening gown at college and had been made over into a house gown. I braided my hair in two pigtails and wound them around my head and fastened a blue bow on top. As the oldest daughter I felt that some sort of matronly airs devolved upon me, so I added a dainty white apron that Aunt Jane gave me the year before for Christmas.

"My goodness," Emily exclaimed, as she came back for the twentieth time from peeping through the parlor curtains to stop before the grate and look at herself in the glass above the mantle, "if we have to keep up all this agony for two weeks, we'll all be dead of nervous exhaustion."

But we didn't keep it up—hardly. Before tea was over you would have thought that we, as a family, had known Charles Sherwood all his natural life. Talk of Chesterfield—he wouldn't be noticed if Charles were around. He not only was at ease himself but succeeded in putting

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everybody else there in a very short time. He isn't particularly handsome, although he has deep brown eyes that seem to look into your inmost soul, and a high, broad forehead which gives him a very striking appearance. He is taller than Tom, or even than Will. I just come to his shoulder, so I have to look up to him, literally.

While Emily and I put away the tea things and did the dishes, he sat and talked with mother. As I went in and out the room I saw that mother was warming to him as she rarely did to a stranger, and I said as much to Tom, who had come out to the kitchen for a little private talk.

"Sure," he said. "You all will; you can't help it. You'll take him to your hearts; everybody does."

Then he told us that the reason he was so particularly anxious to bring him home with him was because it was to be his first Christmas alone, his sister having married within the year and gone to the Pacific Coast to live, and his mother having died the year previous. Tom says he belongs to a fine old Southern family. His father was killed in the war, and they lost everything except honor and ambition.

After the dishes were done we went in and had music. Emily is always ashamed of our piano; she calls it "tinkely," but it sounds very well *I* think. Tom got out his violin and he and

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Emily gave us several selections. Then Tom played the violin and asked Charles to sing. Of course we supposed he would sing hymns; but Tom struck into some college songs, and when they were through with those they gave us "Oft in the Stilly Night" and "Annie Laurie."

I could see that mother was debating as to whether or not she ought to ask him to conduct worship, but Tom settled that by calling Emily back to the piano to play a hymn for prayers. After we had all joined in singing "Softly Now the Light of Day," Tom set a chair over by the table and asked Charles to conduct worship. If you'll believe me, he didn't seem to see the big Bible at all, but took a little Testament from his pocket and read the Sermon on the Mount, after which we all knelt while he prayed the simplest, most heartfelt prayer; and somehow we all knew that he was just good—no fuss and feathers, no pomposity, no show of learning—just plain good.

I used to wonder, when Dr. Harmon would tell the Lord so much about the Jews and the heathen, and all that, what was the use when the Lord knew it all anyway, but I didn't know what people would pray about if they omitted those things—that is, in public prayer I mean. Of course, there are always things in plenty to pray about in private, but one wouldn't like to be

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always talking about shortcomings in public, and that's mostly what my prayers are made of. The Lord knows all about my troubles, but I don't think I'd care to parade them before people. Deacon Bland is always calling himself a "worm of the dust" and one of God's unworthy "creatures," but I never did fancy calling oneself names in public. O, dear, I do run so, and that's just what that vacation did. Before we knew it, it was gone.

When mother told the boys good-by she kissed Charles just as she did Tom and made him promise to write to us and to come home with Tom for the Easter holidays, all of which he did.

In June he finished school, but he was not to take regular work until fall. He secured a position as supply for the summer in the city, only ten miles from us, and every week he ran out to see us, and sometimes oftener, and then—O, I hardly know how it all happened—but suddenly we seemed to know that he was coming especially to see me; and pretty soon he told me so, and I—well, I loved him more than all the world, I was sure of that. But my unfitness for a minister's wife worried me greatly; but Charles wouldn't let us talk of that at all; the only question, he said, was, Did I love him enough to share his troubles and his poverty, and was mother willing to give me to him? Of course I did, and

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of course mother was; so it was all settled, all except the time. Mother wanted us to wait a year and give her time to instill more housewifely knowledge into me, but Charles wanted to take me with him to his first work. He insisted that it would be much better for us both, so finally it was agreed that we should be married the last of September.

Charles is a Methodist. He didn't know in the least what his first work would be like, only he said he knew it would be poor, because he had to begin at the bottom and work up. I wished it could have been nearer home, and it could, only Charles felt in duty bound to go to his own Conference, where they were sadly in need of men.

Conference "set"—that's what they call it—the first week in October, so we were married on the twenty-fifth of September. Charles expected me to go with him, but I suddenly grew economical and concluded to stay here and be getting my household linen and all those things in order, at least that was the reason I gave Charles; but the truth is I was afraid I would not know how to act at a Conference, and might do something to disgrace my husband, or at least appear ignorant, for I don't know the least little thing about bishops and such things (mother is a Presbyterian), so I thought I would better wait about attending so formidable a meeting until I had

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time to learn more about what the different names mean. When it came time for Charles to go I almost wished I had decided differently, but the days have passed more quickly than I thought possible, for I have been very busy. We are only planning to furnish about three rooms, but I want them nice and "homey."

OCTOBER 10. Charles has come home, and we are to leave day after to-morrow for Patricia, our new home. It is said that the town is neither so important nor so formidable as the name might imply, and although it is one of the oldest towns it is also one of the least progressive.

Probably I shall not write again until we are all settled in our new home. Mother gave me this diary. She wants me to write in it when I am happy, and especially when I am sad or perplexed, just as I would talk to her if I were with her. She says it will help me in many ways, because if I am happy or sad, it will prove an outlet for my feelings; and if I am angry or discontented and inclined to say things which I ought not, if I will write them down here I will doubtless feel ashamed and want to erase them; and if I see how badly they look, I may realize how badly they sound.

I must stop now and go down, for Emily has just come up to tell me that the parlor is full of company come to bid me good-by.

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If I could know of all the comments and the prophecies that have been uttered by these dear people since the announcement of my marriage came to them—like a thunderbolt from a clear sky—I should no doubt be both a wiser and a sadder woman; but this I know—some of them love me, and all of them “wish me well,” while as for me, I love them all.

To my dear, dear friends, my very own, I shall not say good-by, no more than I shall say it to the dear old home. I shall kiss them all, throw a kiss to the rooms as I pass down the hall, then walk out without looking back *once*, then I am sure I shall not cry.

PATRICIA, OCTOBER 26. I don't see how so many things could happen in a little more than two weeks. The calendar says two weeks, but I must have lived as much as a year. When we first arrived we went to a hotel; then Charles went out to find some member of our church who could tell him about things he wanted to know, and especially about a house, for we knew this church had no parsonage. In just a little while he came back, and with him was the dearest little old man I have ever seen. His hair is as white as cotton, but his eyes are as young as youth itself. There was no mistaking the cordiality of his welcome in the grip with which he shook my hand. Then, asking if the baggage in evidence

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was ours, he caught up a suit-case in one hand and a shawl-strap in the other, saying, as he did so, "We'll be going right now if you're ready, Sister Sherwood."

I looked at Charles, and he explained, "Brother Peace has very kindly invited us to his home and insists upon our accepting the invitation." "I insist because it is my right," interposed Brother Peace. "If a Methodist preacher has come to this town in the last twenty-five years and failed to make my house his home, I have not heard of him." "Surely, then," I cried, "it is time you had a rest. Will it not inconvenience your wife to have us come in at this time of day? It is nearly twelve."

He laughed as he said, "I rather think it will be quite a relief to her, for she has been putting your names in the pot every day since the appointments were read out, and getting rid of the extra doin's she cooks up has been mighty hard on her, and worse on me."

Notwithstanding the cordiality of this invitation I confess that I approached the house with some trepidation. But when I had met Sister Peace face to face I was at home and knew likewise that I should have some one to "mother" me. I could feel it in the atmosphere.

Sister Peace is the opposite of her husband in size, but like him in disposition, for while he is

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little and jolly, she is large and more jolly. The living room looks exactly like her—"homey" and spick and span. They are the kind of people who always have enough on the table to feed a small army, and if a guest comes in unexpectedly, have only to add another glass of jelly or an extra dish of preserves.

After dinner, Charles went down to the store to have a talk with Brother Peace and get some suggestions about house-hunting. We had brought almost all our belongings in trunks and intended buying our furniture here, so that, as soon as we found shelter, we could set right up at housekeeping. As we had so little money, we decided that it would be better to rent some rooms than to try and spread over even a cottage with our limited amount of furniture.

Finding rooms was not easy, but on the second day he found a house in a neighborhood near the church where we could get two rooms. He came back and asked me if I thought we could make out with two rooms, one very large and the other very small. I was getting anxious to be by ourselves, so I said I would go with him to look at them. It was getting late in the afternoon of a gray day, so I couldn't see very well just what the rooms looked like, but the old-fashioned house with the low ceiling and great fireplace appealed to me, and I thought we could make

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them do nicely. True, the kitchen is very small, so low that when "Sister Sharon" takes the clothes out of the boiler (Sister Sharon washes for me. I'll write more about her later) if she lifts the broom straight up, the brush of the broom hits the ceiling, and if she holds it to either side, it brushes against the wall. She *will* take the clothes out with the broom, although I had Charles go to a great deal of trouble to get a nice stick for her. She says, "I allus have took my clothes out with a broom handle an' I don't expect to be outdone at my time o' life by a little ole ornery room."

Well, after I went back from looking at the rooms I told Sister Peace that we had found a place and would go to housekeeping the next day.

"Why, honey!" she exclaimed, "your things haven't come yet, have they?"

I explained to her that most of our belongings were in our trunks and that we intended going down early in the morning to select such furniture as we needed. "You see," I added, "we are just setting up housekeeping, and have not much except wedding presents."

"The good land, you are?" she ejaculated. "Why, I knew in reason you was both young, but I never had an idy you was new married. I told pa that I expected you hadn't been married more'n a year or two."

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I was so elated I could hardly wait until Charles came. I sat right down and wrote mother to let her know what matronly airs I was doubtless developing.

But I must get on or I'll never get to the house-keeping part. We had the rooms cleaned early in the morning while we were down selecting such things as we needed. Just after dinner we had everything taken over. It seems to me I never saw such a complication; it was worse than house-cleaning time at home. There was so much in so little space, and Charles said that every time you wanted to lay an article down you had to pick another up, so we didn't get on very fast. Then, too, neither of us knew much about how we ought to proceed, except that I was positive the cookstove ought to go up first—so that was done; and then what do you think that man of mine said? He calmly looked over that room, took out his watch, and remarked, "It's nearly three o'clock. I guess I'll unpack my books."

"Charles Sherwood," I cried, "are you crazy? What would you do with them—add them to the general debris? Three o'clock, and not a curtain up! And we right here on the street—not a bed up, nor a carpet down, nor *anything*."

"That's so," he replied, submissively. "I guess I was rather premature, but I don't know much

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about this chaos, so I thought I might put the books up and have that job done."

"But you couldn't," I reminded him, "until the matting is down."

"That's so too," he agreed. "Well, let's put the matting down." He stood there with his hands in his pockets surveying the room. "Jimminy crickets," he suddenly exclaimed, "but that'll be a job! What ever will we do with all this truck?"

What would we? How should I know? And then I just leaned up against the friendly-looking old mantel and cried. And then? Well, then Charles flew to work and kicked himself, as he called it for a knave, and a fool, and all the other disagreeable things to which he could liken himself, after which he piled a quantity of stuff out of the biggest rocker and sat down and took me on his lap and dried my eyes and said all kinds of sweet nothings to me, declaring that the old house might go to Halifax, or any other undesirable place, so long as we had the rocking-chair and a fire.

Pretty soon we got up and went to work, feeling so much better. We piled all the "truck," as Charles calls it, to one side of the room while we laid the matting on the vacant side, after which we set up the bed, the table, and the dresser—and lo! order began to appear. It really did not

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matter about curtains, or even shades, for the first night, because the windows had old-fashioned shutters which we could close.

We worked until it was almost dark before we thought of what we were going to get to eat. "I'm as hungry as a bear; I can eat anything" was the answer Charles gave me when I asked him what I should get for supper.

"O, don't worry, dear. I'll go downtown after awhile and buy something already prepared," he continued, when he saw the look of dismay on my face.

Just then there came a knock at the door, and in came Brother Peace with his smiling face and a basket of steaming hot supper. I don't think I was ever more relieved in my life. Charles says that Brother Peace is a part of the salt of the earth. I guess he is, and I think Sister Peace must be the other part.

At last, we really did get things in order. There is a little pantry off the kitchen where we have stored some things; also we have one side of the closet under the stairs in which to hang our clothing—which reminds me the most awful thing almost happened, but didn't quite. The clothing had been hanging there several days when I opened the door for something, and a mouse ran out. In a moment, my heart was in my mouth. Supposing it had eaten some of our

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clothing. I caught down Charles's best coat. He had been very extravagant when we were married and had paid fifty dollars for his suit, but he told me that it must last him five years for very best. Supposing the mouse had eaten it! I examined it, and was about to hang it back when I saw underneath the collar a hole as big as a half dollar. I almost fainted when I thought what a calamity it would have been had the mouse chosen to eat some other part of the garment. Of course, I could mend it there with a bit of black silk so that it would never be noticed. After it was mended, I put it away in the dresser, where I think it will remain—what time it is not on his back.

I believe I said once that one of the rooms was very large and the other very small. The large one is eighteen by twenty-two feet. It is lighted by four windows so high that the lower sill is on a level with my shoulder when I walk up to it. The panes of glass are six by eight inches. The room being so gloomy, we decided to get red shades to go underneath the white muslin curtains, and red and white matting for the floor. When we had everything in order the room looked quite cheery, and it was not until the blinds were thrown open on a sunny day that I noticed how dirty the walls were. The woman whom we engaged to clean the house had washed

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the windows and scrubbed the floors, and pronounced the work done—and I supposed it was.

The rooms are ceiled and painted. At one time the large room *had been* painted white. Charles says it was done in the year one. I don't know how he knows, but I never doubt his word. Anyway, the original is not visible on account of various coats of dirt and flyspecks. There are no screens; I wonder what we shall do when summer comes. Mother always says, "Don't cross your bridges until you come to them," so I guess I won't. But about that dirt and those flyspecks—that was something to worry over here and now. All my joy was turned to bitterness. I kept the shades down in order to shut out the light. I wished we were able to hire it repainted, but I knew we were not, so I would not bother Charles about it. But one day when he was called to the country to conduct a funeral, and told me when he left that it might be dark before he got back, I decided to see what soap and water could do toward bettering conditions.

As soon as he was out of sight I put on my oldest dress and a big apron and flew to work. I began on the mantel and the woodwork around the fireplace. These showed such improvement that I took down the curtains, and with more hot water, soap, and washing powder attacked

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the window casings, then the doors and door casings. I was so excited that I gave no heed to the fact that I was taking the skin off my hands as well as the dirt from the walls. I kept steadily on, never thinking of dinner, until Charles walked in at about three o'clock in the afternoon, having come home sooner than he had expected.

He looked first at the clean woodwork, then at me, then gave a prolonged whistle. "I say, little woman, this is a big improvement. Let's do the whole thing."

"O Charles," I said, "we couldn't. I've worked all day at this little bit and I could never reach the walls enough to do any good."

"Of course you can't, but I can, and I'm going to," he replied. "To-morrow, bright and early, I'm going to begin on the walls; then I'll bring in the kitchen table, mount it, and give the ceiling a dose. In two days from now, madam, you will not recognize your humble abode."

"It is so good of you to propose it," I answered, "and it would look beautiful; but suppose some one were to come?"

"We are not at home on those days," he returned. "No one can see from the street, thanks to high windows, so *I* shall be all right. As for *you*, you may take your choice—gather up your patchwork and go visiting, or retire to the kitchen."

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I told him that I would choose the latter, as I could busy myself very nicely there, for I had no doubt he would develop an appetite equal to *two* bears, because he is always as hungry as *one*.

So the next morning, true to his word, Charles tied up his head in a towel, then tied one of my long aprons around his neck and another around his waist and began operations. When we got to the ceiling we had a time moving the furniture around, and spreading papers over the matting, and dear knows what all. But in two days it was done, and is *so* nice and clean; but poor Charles can scarcely turn his head. He says he belongs to the "stiff-neck generation."

NOVEMBER 20. A good many things have transpired since I wrote last. I was so very much occupied in getting everything to rights that I gave very little attention to church affairs until I was invited to join the Ladies' Aid and informed that I was expected to have charge of a class in Sunday school.

From what I have heard of Ladies' Aids, I think this one is about normal, and I think my class of half-grown boys in the Sunday school is going to prove interesting, but I have not had sufficient experience yet to warrant an authoritative opinion. I have been occupied with more weighty affairs. Brother and Sister Peace greeted us so warmly, and have treated us so

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nicely, that I had not noticed that most of the members were treating us rather coolly. But finally it came out. Charles knew the situation after the first week. Brother Peace told him, but he did not want to worry me with it, and I guess he felt too that I would advise taking our "doll rags" and going home.

It seems the church is badly in debt to the Church Erection Society, and the Society, having been lenient with them for a number of years, has finally decided to sell the church unless the debt is paid within the next year. Several things have made against the progress of the church, the debt being one of them, and last year the majority of the members, becoming discouraged, wished to give up the building and disband. But the faithful few oppose this move, and while the ones who were in favor of giving up sent a petition to the Conference asking to be left without a minister, the "faithful few" sent another demanding that no such thing be done. These are the circumstances under which we came to Patricia, although at the time Charles knew nothing of them. Charles says he supposes they thought a man would, naturally, be opposed to butting his brains out against a stone wall if he *knew* it.

Brother Peace says that the debt could be paid with ease if the members would work together,

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but the disgruntled ones are really anxious for an excuse to disband. The disbanding element is led by the Van Alstynes, or, rather, by Mrs. Van Alstyne. Mr. Van Alstyne seems to be rather a silent member of the firm, socially and religiously, but Mrs. Van Alstyne has great ambitions for Algernon and Celestine and all the other little Van Alstynes. She herself came up from the "ranks," and has been permitted, since her marriage to Mr. Van Alstyne, a wealthy business man, to cruise around the outer circle of society, but never really getting into the swim. She feels that her church affiliations have kept her down socially, but she has not the courage to withdraw because of traditions—it would not look well. This church was founded by her grandfather, or some of her ancestors, and her father was class leader for forty years, consequently she was too honorable to sneak out between pastorates, as did Mr. and Mrs. Keith Gray, who went to the Episcopalians. When Charles found their names on the class book, and called on them, Mrs. Gray remarked, "O, it was an oversight no doubt. We *did* once belong to your church, but we are Episcopalians now." She failed to say that her Episcopalianism was but one Sunday old at the time of our arrival.

I said that Mrs. Van Alstyne was too honorable, but, really, I guess she has too much rever-

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ence for tradition, for it seems to me 'most any way of severing oneself from a society that is distasteful would be preferable to seeking to disband the society, that one might have excuse for going elsewhere.

Judge and Mrs. Small are "agin" the matter of keeping a pastor because the Van Alstyne's are. The Smalls toady to the Van Alstyne's—at least, Mrs. Small does. Poor little thing! she is so affected and so ignorant, I really am sorry for her. She seems to be making a desperate effort to hang on to the hem of Mrs. Van Alstyne's garments in the hope that she may thus be carried into the current when Mrs. Van Alstyne arrives. As for Mrs. Van Alstyne, she gives me the impression of constantly striving to shake Mrs. Small off. She dare not be absolutely rude, on account of the influence Judge Small might exert upon her husband's business, for the Judge is a power commercially and politically, if he doesn't cut much of a figure socially.

There are about one hundred members, divided in the ratio of forty to sixty on the subject of "To be or not to be"; but in this case the minority rules, because the bishop and the presiding elder are with them, and they think the Lord also is on their side—I suppose I ought to say *our* side, for, since we came against the will of the majority, we no doubt belong to the minority.

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Practically all the moneyed people in the church are on the other side, except the Blairs—who are among the wealthiest people in the town, and also belong to the “first families.” Mr. Blair is from the East, and was a classmate of Mrs. Blair’s brother at Harvard. It was through him that they became acquainted. They lived in Baltimore for several years after their marriage, coming here after the death of Mrs. Blair’s father to oversee his large estate, and to be companions to her mother and young sisters. The young ladies are at Vassar just now, and the Blairs are living with the mother, Mrs. Mac-Carter, at her lovely suburban home, Maple Heights.

Mrs. Blair is one of the most thorough ladies I have ever met. There is none of the striving to impress you with “Behold, we are the people.” She just goes her way dispensing courtesy to the common people while being received with gladness by the patricians because she was born to the purple. Mr. Blair is a very fine man. Charles thinks a great deal of him. He says that he is willing to do his share toward liquidating the debt, but does not propose to do it all. He is the only member who has paid one cent on salary since we came.

Because the opposition were so set on not having any minister, the official board, at its first

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meeting, refused to assess any salary, and here we were for weeks, not knowing what we were to have or whether we were to have *anything*, and all the time our money getting lower and lower. At last we were entirely out of money, and almost out of provisions. Sister Peace supplies us with milk and butter. We had gotten down to bread and milk for supper, oatmeal and milk for breakfast, and dinner unprovided for, when the donation came.

I think Sister Sharon brought about the donation; also that she did it partly in self-defense, because the last time she washed for me I had to tell her that we had given up coffee and had none in the house. She always comes before breakfast and stays until after dinner, so she has a fair knowledge of the resources of the larder. This time she had to stop her washing and run down to see Sister Peace and get a cup of coffee, else, she declared, she would "just nachally die" of a sick headache.

I never had any idea before what funny things come in donation parties. To be sure, there were packages of tea and coffee, of rice and salt and soda—enough salt and soda to stock a small grocery store; then there was a sack of flour and some bacon—neither of us likes bacon, but Sister Sharon does—some sugar, some canned fruit, and a few glasses of jelly. One of the members,

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who clerks in a dry-goods store, brought five yards of red flannel. I wondered what in the world I was expected to do with that, until Sister Sharon told me it was to make me ■ nice warm petticoat. I gave it to her. Some one sent me a pair of pebble-goat shoes, two sizes too large. They fit Sister Sharon beautifully, and she agrees to wash four times for them, so that elephant is disposed of—those elephants, more properly speaking. But the contributions from members who live on farms adjacent to town capped the climax. There were bushels of onions and turnips, more than a dozen pumpkins, besides lye, hominy, soft soap, and molasses.

We hadn't seats for half the people, so they just walked around and shook hands and talked awhile and then went and left us with our treasures. We had to beg permission to let the vegetables remain in the hall until morning, when Charles went up town and had Brother Peace send down for them (Brother Peace keeps a grocery store). He told us that night that he would take such things as we did not want and exchange them for things we needed.

All things considered, we thought the donation quite nice. It certainly was timely, and we were thankful until the quarterly meeting, when Charles came home rather blue. I asked him what salary they assessed us, and he answered,

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"Five hundred dollars." I said, "Well, we have no clothing to buy, and if we are very careful, I think we might live on that." He said, "Yes, if they pay it." I said, "Why, of course they'll pay it." He said, "O, I reckon they'll pay it according to *their* count. Do you know they have already paid seventy dollars?" "Seventy dollars!" I exclaimed. "Why, no one has paid a cent except Mr. Blair—he paid five dollars."

"You forget, dear," was the answer. "Brother Peace has paid five dollars in milk and butter—and they count the donation sixty dollars."

"*Sixty dollars!*" I gasped. "Why, we would rather have had *ten dollars* in cold cash."

"Yes," said Charles, "but this was one time when, as Sister Sharon would say, we didn't have our 'ruther.'"

I quote Sister Sharon so frequently that I must give her more extended notice. Sister Sharon is the "relict" of one Solomon Sharon, who for many years was the janitor of our church. When he died he bequeathed his wife, Sarah, as a sacred charge to the church (which means the minister). Since that time Sarah, or Sister Sharon, as she insists on being called, has swept and dusted the church, washed for the minister's family and done such other odd jobs as time and strength permit. She is a good, easygoing creature with an abundance of native wit and homely philos-

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ophy. She considers herself a part of the minister's household and takes a great interest in all his affairs. She likes a bit of gossip, although I hardly think she ever gossips with intent to make trouble. I have never heard her speak in an unkind manner of anyone, unless it might be of Mrs. Van Alstyne. She doesn't like her because she resents being called "Sister" Van Alstyne.

At first I rather resented having my washerwoman handed down to me as a sacred charge to be accepted and cherished *nolens volens*, but I have arrived at a different point of view. When the available resources run low it is all right with Sister Sharon. She is delighted to wait until the exchequer is replenished—and, usually, she is quite active in seeing that it is replenished.

DECEMBER 2. Well, Thanksgiving has come and gone, and I have spent my first Thanksgiving away from mother and Emily and the boys. I did not allow myself to think much about it before the time came, because I did not want to get blue and have Charles think that I would have been happier anywhere than with him, for of course I wouldn't. I made my plans to get out our very finest linen, our choicest silver, glass, and china. When we counted our money we hardly felt able to buy a chicken, but I ordered a nice little roast. Sister Peace sent us a lovely mince pie and a quart of cranberries.

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I had my dinner started when the messenger boy came with a telegram. I was awfully frightened, for of course, I thought about the home folks. But it was from the minister at Brownsville, wanting Charles to come and assist in the funeral services of a man who had been a friend of the family for many years. I am ashamed to put down here the cruel words I said, but I have always found honest confession to be good for the soul, so I will confess. I said, "I don't see why it couldn't have happened so as to have had the funeral on yesterday or to-morrow." The moment the words were said I was so ashamed and sorry I did not dare to look Charles in the face.

He just reached over and drew me into his arms, saying as he did so, "Don't say that, Lovie. You wouldn't if you had known him, he was such a noble man; and he leaves a dear young daughter, no older than you, who will be all alone now."

In a moment it flashed over me, "What a lonely Thanksgiving for the poor girl!" Then, I thought of the thousands of unhappy people to whom the day would bring sadness, and straight-way began to count my blessings.

When I had helped Charles off I began to wonder what I was going to do about my dinner. I dreaded to eat by myself. I might go out into

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the highways and compel some one. There was Sister Sharon—why not? After I had argued with myself awhile, I put on my hat and jacket and went down the street to her room. She was getting ready to go to the union services at the opera house. I saw at a glance that she had been crying, and my heart smote me that I had not realized sooner that she knew what it meant to be alone and lonely, not only on Thanksgiving, but on every other day. She was as pleased as a child with the invitation, which, when I had given, I hurried home to get everything in readiness, for I meant to honor her with just as much preparation as I had intended for ourselves.

At a few minutes of one o'clock she came in, all bright and cheery, telling me about the services, with bits of gossip, now and then about Mrs. Judge Small's new "bunnet," and Mrs. Van Alstyne's new silk dress, "so stiff it could stand alone."

When we sat down to the table I asked her to say grace, which she did very sincerely. Then I helped the plates, and we ate and talked and exchanged recipes, and had a generally good time. I could see that she was delighted with the honor I had shown her by getting out the best of everything. "Now ain't this piece of chiny beautiful!" she would exclaim, or, "Such a lovely tablecloth! It's real damask, ain't it? I knowed it was—Mis'

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Blair herself ain't none a whit finer. I judge your ma give you this."

It was three o'clock when we were through dinner. Then we did the dishes, after which we sat around the fire and talked. Toward dusk she insisted on putting on one of Charles's old coats and bringing in the wood and water. Then she went for the mail and brought me such a lovely long letter from home. As she bade me good-night she said, "This has been the pleasantest Thanksgiving I've had since Solomon died."

By the time I had read my letter over two or three times, and had answered it, I heard the train whistle and knew that Charles would soon be here. After all, it had been a good Thanksgiving.

II

JANUARY 20. To think I have not written a word since last Thanksgiving, not so much as recorded a New Year's resolution! Not even in storybooks, I think, have things happened as quick and fast as they have in the Sherwood family since I wrote last.

One morning, about the middle of December, the eighteenth to be exact, a carriage drove up to our door, a gentleman alighted, threw away his cigar and started up the steps. Charles and I were both peeping from behind the curtains, for we had heard the carriage drive up and stop. Mr. Pearson, our landlord, was just starting out and met the strange gentleman on the steps. Then Mr. Pearson turned and came in the hall with him, and I heard him say, "First door to the right"—after which I fled to the kitchen and listened through the keyhole. I couldn't keep the run of the conversation very well, but I knew there was something he wanted us to do, for when he left I heard Charles say, "I'll consult my wife this morning, and this afternoon we will call on your wife and see if satisfactory arrangements can be made."

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As soon as the man was down the steps, I called Charles to come and give me the particulars. Well, the long and the short of it is that the gentleman is the wealthy Mr. Edgemont, of New York, who owns some large industries near here, and whose family lives in a beautiful home on Maple Avenue, and keeps a butler and a chef and a French maid and all sorts of luxuries. Now, this man, who seemed otherwise sane and in his right mind, wanted us to go and live in his house until the first of June, while they will be absent on a southern trip in the hope of arresting tuberculosis, which is threatening Mrs. Edgemont.

They have only one child, and they intended to take her nurse and the maid, but wanted to dismiss the other servants. However, they did not want to leave the house without a caretaker. Some one suggested to them that they get us to live in the house and look after things for them. We talked it all over, pro and con, and I confess I was not much in favor of shouldering such an undertaking; but as Charles had promised to go around, of course we went. When I had seen inside of the house and had met Mrs. Edgemont, who is graciousness personified, I gave Charles a look which he has already learned to interpret as "Barkis is willin'!"

Mrs. Edgemont laid before us her proposition, which was to allow us the use of four rooms and

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the kitchen and dining room. She would leave the rooms furnished with the heavy furniture, also with carpets and curtains, and we might add any little things we chose to make the rooms "homey" and give them individuality. We could also have a vacant room in which to store such of our goods as we chose.

We were to use as freely as we pleased the fuel in the coal cellar; and as she showed me over the house she opened the pantry, saying as she did so, "I have known for some time that we were going away, so my larder is not very well stocked, but such things as you find here I want you to use, for I shall need to stock up afresh when we come home in the spring."

The only recompense we were to give for all this luxury was to feed the birds, and to open and air the unoccupied rooms occasionally. There was only one thing, as I then saw it, against this proving a perfect paradise, and that was the fact that it is next door to the Van Alstyne's. However, I suppose every rose must have some thorns.

The Edgemonts were in a hurry to get off and we were anxious to get settled before Christmas, for Emily was coming to visit us, so the very next day we began to tear up and get ready to flit.

O dear, I was *so tired* when it was all over, and poor Mrs. Edgemont was literally worn out. She

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certainly was nice to us: she acted all the time as though we were doing them a favor by coming in to care for the house. She told me that she knew very few of the ladies of our church, none intimately except Mrs. Blair, who, she said, had recommended us to her as people of culture who would enjoy and care for her home. Then she added: "I hope you will not find it too lonely in this large house when your husband is out. I only wish I might say that I am leaving you congenial neighbors, but I have never met the people next door. The woman has never called, but she talks to the servants over the back fence, and Marie"—Marie is the maid—"seems quite intimate with her. I am positive that she sold her a number of my discarded hats which I told her to express to a friend in the city for a charity bazaar; I recognized one of the plumes on a hat she wore last Sunday."

Think of it! The great Mrs. Van Alstyne! What would she do if she knew that I knew that Mrs. Edgemont knew! And to think she looked down at me and my poor little turban last Sunday, swaying and tossing that plume about with all the air of just having had it imported from Paris. I certainly ought to be ashamed writing all this stuff, but I have to have some kind of an outlet, and, of course, I can't talk to anyone but Charles, and he only laughs and says,

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"Women are funny 'critters,' anyway." When I told him about this last, and he saw what a delectable bit it was to me, he looked at me very seriously and asked, "Dearie, when you and Mrs. Van Alstyne get to heaven, which you both expect to do, have you ever thought what would be the outcome supposing your mansions joined?"

"No," I replied, "I have never thought of such a contingency; but, since you mention it, I feel sure I should ask permission to stretch a tent under the palm trees."

But to return to the moving: when we had our things all brought over, and the Edgemonts had packed up and gone, we had just five days until Christmas, and Emily was to come on Christmas Eve. We had not written a word about our change of habitation, and I had so minutely described the other abode, and told Emily all about engaging a sleeping room for her from our landlady, and how I hoped she could endure it for a week, that now I was wild with anticipations of what she would say and do.

When I looked through the larder and saw such quantities of delicious possibilities, I was anxious to try my hand at all sorts of concoctions, and accordingly I made three kinds of cake, besides tarts and jumbles, and Emily's favorite candy.

Thursday afternoon, about five-thirty, Decem-

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ber the twenty-third, I was worn to the ragged edge, and was just finishing wiping up the polished floor in the front hall when Charles came home from downtown announcing that we were invited to an oyster supper to be given by the Baptist church down at the city hall. I said: "O Charles, let's go. I am *starved to death*, and there isn't a bite cooked, and I don't feel as though I could ever cook anything."

"Nothing cooked! What's become of all those cakes and jimcracks?"

"O, there's plenty of that kind of stuff, but I don't feel as though I could ever swallow another bite of anything sweet. There isn't a cold biscuit, nor a bite of meat, nor even a cracker."

"What anaconda has been browsing in our pantry?" he challenged.

"None," I explained; "they've been browsing at the back door—whole loads of them: first an old man with one leg, then a young man with one arm, and then a woman and three little children—"

Charles put up his hand in a gesture of—"Stop, pray," and gave a long, low whistle. "We're in for it now," he declared. "The tramps have struck us. That's another thorn in our bed of roses. The Edgemonts kept servants who were glad to be rid of the surplus food, and, con-

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sequently, gave it away to every tramp who asked for it. Therefore, this place is known to the 'brotherhood' as a 'sure find.' But we will soon put a stop to it." (Charles has been reading a lot of books on economical problems, and I think he is anxious to put some of the theories into practice.) "But," he continued, "that doesn't mend matters at the present. I am sorry to remind you that I don't eat oysters and to inform you that I'm still exercising my natural proclivities. I am as ——"

"Hush!" I cried, throwing up my hands in protest.

"Listen!" he commanded, parting the tails of his best calling coat, and seating himself on the stairs. "If you'll stir me up some flapjacks, I'll go make a fire in the stove and bake them myself, then get out the syrup jug and be as happy as Old King Cole, or any other old plutocrat."

Therefore Charles went to the oyster supper filled to comfortable complacency with batter-cakes and maple syrup, while I went with "hunger gnawing at my vitals"—and came away with it still gnawing. We went at six-thirty o'clock, but every table was filled and there was every indication that there was going to be a "crush." The minister confided to Charles that they were in a panic for fear the supply would give out, and hoped we would take advantage of

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the first vacancy to go in to supper. I guess they meant to spread the soup over as many quarters as possible, for they only brought me about two good tablespoonfuls of the soup and one little dried-up and squeezed-out oyster. I told Charles that if it was a game of oyster, oyster, who's got the oyster? I was "it." I was so hungry, I couldn't sleep. I was glad of an excuse to waken Charles at the first peep of dawn, supposedly to get at our last day's preparation for Christmas, but in reality to give me a chance to cook breakfast.

Emily was carried away with delight at the sight of her room and of the whole house; she does love beautiful things. She sat up after we had gone to bed and wrote mother all about everything.

Next morning we had such a surprise. We had a letter from Will telling us that an old friend of his, Eugene Mac Carter, would be in Patricia for the holidays and would be around to see us. He added: "I suspect you girls remember hearing me talk of Gene. He was my one particular chum at Johns Hopkins. He is practicing in Richmond now. I ran across him a few days ago and asked him to spend the holidays with me, if he could get off; but he said he was going to Patricia to visit his old home, that his sisters were coming home from Vassar, and had planned

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a family reunion. When I told him about you folks he said he would surely hunt you up." Which he did, and was infatuated with Emily the moment he saw her. The rest of us knew it, but *she* didn't, which made it all the better.

The next day Mrs. Blair brought her sisters to call on us, and from thenceforth we lived in a round of gayety. There was a large house-party at the Blairs', for the girls had brought some friends, and Mrs. Blair had invited some from the city, so, of course, there was something going on all the time.

They all went wild over Emily's playing and made her quite the center of attraction, so that I really think she forgot she had not as fine clothes as the other girls.

At the breaking up of the party the girls from the city invited the entire company, including Emily, to spend the day in the city sightseeing, took them to grand opera in the evening, and entertained them that night. They all drove by on their way to the train to tell us good-by and to pick up Emily.

After they drove on, we stood at the gate and watched them until the last carriage turned the corner, then we turned to go in, and as we did so I saw Mrs. Van Alstyne step back from the window quickly. I knew that she had been peeping, and also that she would give a pretty penny

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to know what was going on, but as we had no servants whom she might question over the back fence, I hardly saw how she was to find out.

Charles got ready to go out, saying as he did so that he might not be in before dinner, as there were several matters needing his attention. As he kissed me good-by he said: "You look all done up, dear. Go lie down and take a good rest. Never mind about dinner, we'll eat the scraps."

I looked around the disordered rooms, picked up a glove here and a handkerchief there, but finally concluded that the task of putting the house to rights must wait awhile, and decided to take my husband's advice. I punched the fire in the grate, then threw myself on the couch in a veritable heap of despair. I felt sick, I felt lonesome, I felt dissatisfied with myself, but I decided to be sensible and go to sleep and see if it was not, after all, just tired-outness that ailed me. I was just dozing off when I heard some one come up the back steps. In a moment my heart was in my mouth, for I remembered that every one of the back doors was unlocked. Charles has told me to keep all the back entrances locked and pay no attention to tramps when I am here alone.

When the knock sounded I got up and went, wondering as I did so what I could best spare to appease the appetite of the man, woman, or

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child whom I should find waiting. When I opened the door whom should I behold but Mrs. Van Alstyne! The shock was such as to almost take my breath, so that before I could even say "Good morning," or "Will you come in?" she exclaimed, "Why, Mrs. Sherwood, you're as pale as a ghost; are you sick?"

"No, only tired and a little nervous. Will you come in?" I replied.

She was already in, and I led the way to the living room, making the while all sorts of apologies for the disordered rooms, more to make conversation than because I really cared, for I have a theory that people ought not to make *first* calls of a morning, and especially not by the back door. Not that I don't like back-door neighbors of the kind that we have back home, the ones who come to borrow salt and soda, and baking powder, or to retail a bit of gossip they've just heard from the grocer's boy. I like them, I repeat, and I can even endure the "snoopy" kind like Susan Wall, who walks in without knocking and lifts the covers off the pots to see what you're cooking. O yes, I'm used to all sorts of back-door neighbors, but I never before heard of *ultra fashionable* people making their first calls by that entrance. I said to myself, or to Mrs. Van Alstyne in my mind: "Madam, if you expect me to return this call, you're mighty much mistaken.

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When you come to my *front* door and treat me as an equal I may think about the matter."

If I was at a loss for something to say, she wasn't. She plunged forth into all sorts of questions which she shot at me as though they came from a gun. Finally she asked: "Aren't you afraid to stay here alone evenings? I'd think you'd be scared 'to death here, anyway, being responsible for so many valuable things."

I replied that I hardly thought anyone would be likely to carry off the furniture, and that there were no small articles of great value about, as we had asked the Edgemonts to put all such articles with the silver in the safety vault at the bank.

"Well, don't you fool yourself about all the silver being in the bank, because it isn't. There's plenty of it upstairs, besides hundreds—yes, thousands—of dollars' worth of cut glass and china. There's one hand-painted china set that cost seven hundred and fifty dollars."

"Surely," I cried, "you are mistaken, or Mrs. Edgemont would have told me."

"Indeed I'm not mistaken—I know the exact spot where they left it—Marie told me. It's in the closet off the northwest bedroom."

"But," I interposed, "there is no closet off that room."

"Yes but there is. There is a large painting and a highboy, which completely hide the door.

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They were put there for a blind—Marie told me so. She said the Edgemonts did not know that the servants knew it, but they did, and that she looked for that rascally butler to come back any time and help himself to what he wanted. He wanted to stay and keep the house open.”

With this she arose as though to go, but said instead, “Let’s go see if everything is all right.”

Should I follow her? What ought I to do? If only I could have had a moment in which to think, I am sure I should have said, “Wait until I consult my husband.” But impelled by something, I hardly know what (Charles says by my woman’s curiosity), I let her lead me to the hidden treasure, or whatever you want to call it.

We opened the door, and, sure enough, there was the picture and the highboy. I gave a look around the room, saw the two long windows opening off the upper portico, thought what an easy matter it would be for anyone to climb the pillars of the lower porch, open those shutters, come in and carry off half the house without our knowing it when we were sleeping over in the east wing. I was, therefore, quite susceptible when she said, “Let’s move the highboy and see if everything looks all right.” Besides, I was also a little indignant that Mrs. Edgemont had not told me, and wondered if she thought I might be tempted to use any of

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it. Anyway, we removed the obstructions and went in. Two women in a closet of handsome china and elegant cut glass—if you've been there you know; if you haven't, you can guess.

I had no idea of the flight of time until I heard Charles come in the front hall and go back to the kitchen. I ran to the back stairs and called to him to go into the living room and rest; that I would be down in a minute.

Mrs. Van Alstyne was in a panic. She begged me to let her go down the back stairs, saying that she did not want to meet Mr. Sherwood in her morning dress. "But, first, let's put everything back like we found it," she suggested.

"O, no, thank you just the same, but Mr. Sherwood will help me replace them."

"Really I would prefer that you don't tell him that I told you, but pretend to come upon it quite by accident some day."

I made no answer to this suggestion, but showed her down the back stairs as courteously as I could. She took leave of me quite effusively, begging me to run over whenever I felt like it. "O yes," I thought, "now that our social standing seems to be established, you are willing to recognize me." She is the only member who constantly held herself aloof and did not call on me over on Sixth Street.

When I had closed the door I hurried in and

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related the whole affair to Charles, and ended with: "I think the Edgemonts owed it to us to have told us about those things. It looks as though they were afraid to trust us, and I do hate to be humiliated, especially before the Van Alstyne."

Charles sat down on the couch and drew me down beside him, then took his handkerchief and wiped my eyes, for by this time I was crying. "Now, my dear," he said, "you are making a mountain of a molehill, making yourself very unhappy and misjudging good friends. Mr. Edgemont told me all about the china and glass and left it to my discretion as to whether or not I should tell you. He said he had not the slightest idea that it would ever be disturbed, that he left it at his own risk and would never hold us responsible if anything happened. He was afraid that if you knew it was there, you might be nervous, especially if you were in the house alone. So you see it was purely through consideration of you that they left it as they did."

I felt pretty mean after that, and wished I could remember to always do as mother has taught me—credit everybody with the very best motives until they positively prove themselves unworthy.

After dinner Charles went out to a committee meeting and I started to write to mother, but,

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somehow, I couldn't get in the mood for letter-writing and sat at the desk wondering what *was* the matter with me. Then I got to thinking about mother and of her beautiful, unselfish life, and I told myself of all the sweet thoughtful things that I knew she had been doing this Christmastide, just as she always does. Then the thought came to me, "What have *you* done?" Considered from mother's standpoint, I had done nothing, for she always told us it is the spirit that counts. I had been so wrapped up in the "me and mine" that I had scarcely given a thought to outside. Of course I sent presents and messages to the home folks, and I gave Sister Sharon a basket of eatables, and (after Charles had reminded me) hurried downtown and bought cards for my Sunday school class, which I sealed, directed and sent to the tree without even having read them. I could not think of going to the exercises on Christmas Eve because I would not leave Emily. I even begrudged the time Charles had to be away. I really think I am a very poor sort of minister's wife, and I am going to make a resolution, and write it down right here: I'm going to try to feel more interest and show more sympathy with the people and the work. I am going with Charles to visit some of the people who are sick, and, lastly, I am going to stop looking all the time for the mote in Mrs. Van Alstyne's eye

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and take a better look at the beam in my own.

FEBRUARY 18. Such a time as we have been having with the tramps! Some days we had eight or ten, and they (some of them) even went so far as to order coffee and otherwise dictate as to the *menu*. Charles declared his intention of settling right down in the dining room and grappling with the problem at first hand. Accordingly, one morning he fortified himself with a lot of literature (to keep his courage up I think) and settled back in his easy chair to await developments. The first who came was an elderly man, looking cold and thin and hungry, but not in anyway disabled. I let Charles go to the door and pretty soon he came out to the kitchen and asked if I could give the poor old fellow a warm bite, and a cup of coffee—if there was any left. I fixed the “bite” and the coffee and Charles took them to him. When the man had gone and he came back with the dishes I didn’t say a word; I just made a bow and shook my finger at him and laughed.

“But, dearie,” he began, “he’s old, and he has such a pitiful story—”

“So have they all,” I interrupted.

“O, well, I’ll fix the next one,” he declared.

The “next one” happened to be two—two boys who we judged were about sixteen and eighteen

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years of age respectively. Charles took them into the dining room, gave them seats, heard their story, then gave them a good talk—all about the sin of trying to get something for nothing and about the worth of honest labor, and when he was through he said: "Now, I would like very much to give you boys some breakfast, but I could not conscientiously do it, for I would only be encouraging you in vagrancy. However, I do not want you to go away hungry; so if you will come with me to the woodshed, I will show you how you can earn a good breakfast." He took down the saw, got out the ax, and set them to work, then came in and told me that he had given them an hour's work, and asked me would I please give them a bit of breakfast when they were through. After this he sat down to his study of Josiah Strong's *Our Country*, and I went about my work. An hour passed and no boys put in an appearance, then a half hour more. By this time I was tired of keeping up the fire so I suggested to Charles that he had better go look about his boys. Presently, he called me to come to the woodshed, where we found not a stick of wood had been cut or sawed, but lying in a nice little pile on top of the chopping-block were the remnants of the saw and the ax. They had broken the saw in a half dozen pieces, chopped the frame into kindling, nicked the ax beyond

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redemption, and cut the handle from it with a hatchet which they left standing by the block. This experience cost us several dollars, for the tools belonged to Mr. Edgemont and were of the very best quality. I said nothing to Charles and he said nothing to me, we just looked at each other and went into the house. Charles took his books and went up to his study to absorb wisdom from experience.

At dinner he said: "My dear, it is evident we shall be compelled to ignore all knocks at the back door. Keep everything locked all the time."

"Suppose Mrs. Van Alstyne should come?" I ventured.

"She will have to come by the front door. I will explain matters to her myself," was the answer.

So we keep the back locked and ignore all knocks in that vicinity.

This morning I was all alone in the house when the front doorbell rang and I went hurrying to the door. When I opened it, there stood a great six-foot colored man. I believe I should have fainted had not Mrs. Van Alstyne come in the front gate at the moment and pushed right past him into the house just as I said, "I am sorry but I have nothing cooked."

Surely I never was so glad to see anybody. She had seen Charles go out just a little while

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ago, for she was sitting by the window sewing. When she heard the bell she looked up and saw the ugly-looking fellow and knew that one with the impudence to resort to that strategy might not hesitate to push right into the house, so she dropped her sewing and ran. I surely will remember that kindness a long time. I'm going to wipe out all the old scores and begin anew, and, anyway, *she has come in at the front door.*

III

MARCH 15. The wind is howling a perfect gale. Charles has gone to prayer meeting, but I have such a bad cold that he wouldn't let me go. I know Charles hates to hear this wind rising, for he knows it means all sorts of imaginings on my part, and various and sundry trips of his in an effort to locate the burglar who is supposed to be breaking into the house. Deliver me from ever living in anyone's big house or keeping guard over anyone's possessions again!

Charles says I'm actually growing wrinkles between the eyes, and that he expects every morning to see me gray-haired. There was one night when I didn't know but morning might actually find me in that condition.

I think I have not said anything about our having had a country appointment added to our work. There is a church some seven or eight miles in the country which asked to be taken off the circuit and annexed to the station. They asked for only one Sunday a month, and agreed to pay one hundred dollars on salary. The "powers that be" thought best to do it. When Charles told me I said, "I hate to have you do it,

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because the weather is often bad, and it will mean more or less exposure, but the extra money will help so much. Now you can get that encyclopedia."

But he told me that it would not mean any extra money, it was only to lift that much burden off the town church, they being supposed to apply the hundred dollars, that otherwise would have gone on salary, toward the liquidation of the church debt. I have not a very analytical mind, but it looked to me very much as though it would be Charles who would be paying the one hundred dollars, as he would have all the extra work, and be doing something he was not hired to do, and for which he receives no extra pay. However, they added the appointment and Charles fills it. It is the fourth Sunday in every month. In February Sister Sharon was down with the rheumatism and couldn't come to stay with me. Charles went out early in the afternoon of Saturday with one of the members who was in town. He told me to get some of the young ladies to stay with me, and suggested the Murray girls. I was dreading to get dressed and go when I saw little Fanny Murray going by. I ran out and asked her if she would be sure to remember to ask her sisters, and if they could not come, would she please come back by and let me know.

Night came and no girls. Then I remembered

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it was Chautauqua Circle evening, and I had not a doubt they would come when that was over. Ten o'clock came, and still no girls. I began to feel creepy. I would have shut up the house and gone over and asked Mrs. Van Alstyne to keep me, but her sister and her family were visiting her, so I knew her rooms were all full. I put on a brave front and went to bed. I put the little clock on a table by the head of the bed, left the light burning, and tried to read. But all the stories of spooks and hobgoblins I had ever heard kept running through my head. I wasn't so much impressed with them, however, being more interested in wondering what I should do if a real live burglar who "burgled" for a living should appear. Once when I dozed a few minutes, I saw the whole army of tramps whom we had turned from the back door unfed come trooping through the windows off the upper portico, make straight for that closet and set to work throwing the china and cut glass to right and left. When I awoke it was two o'clock, the most spookish hour in all the night. I lay there and shook with a regular nervous chill for what seemed ages. Toward daylight I went to sleep. In the morning when I tried to get up I felt so badly that I went back to bed and stayed there until afternoon, when I remembered that the man was to bring Charles home directly after dinner; also

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that everything below stairs was locked. So I crawled downstairs and unlocked the front door, then got to the living-room couch some way, and was there when Charles found me, and went for the doctor before he even sat down. I soon got all right, but I don't want to stay all night in this great house again. The little girl had forgotten to give the message to her sisters.

MARCH 20. I have just received a telegram from Cousin Caroline saying she will be here on the twenty-third on her way to New Orleans. She will visit me for a few days, then go on to mother and Aunt Jane. Of course they will want her opinion as to what kind of a housekeeper I am getting to be; also how I impress her with my fitness for the station I adorn.

Cousin Caroline has always been the pattern-maker of the family; that is, she sets the standard and makes a mighty effort to have us reach it. Naturally, I am dreading her visit, for she is a great church worker and I know she will search out all my shortcomings—she always did. I remember the very first time she came to visit us. I was nine and just learning to do patchwork quilt pieces. One day I was to go with her for a particularly pleasant excursion, but must finish my "stunt" before I went. When I carried the bit of patchwork for her to see she made me sit down and take out every stitch and do it over.

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Cousin Caroline is eleven years older than I, consequently, at that time she was a young lady of twenty and (as I thought) the most beautiful being in all the world. I adored her and would do anything to please her. So, seated on a stool at her feet, I toiled away at the bit of patchwork, while she, with her hat and jacket on, sat with folded arms and waited, "like patience on a monument, smiling at grief."

APRIL 18. Cousin Caroline has come and gone. I had *such* a time getting ready for her. Sister Sharon was down with rheumatism in her back and could not come to help me. I wanted to wash all the windows in the part of the house we use. Charles said it was utter nonsense, but insisted on getting some one if it must be done. However, when we took an inventory of our cash and found that, between us, we could only muster eighty-five cents, we gave up the idea of hiring anyone, and Charles laid aside his sermon and helped me. Then I had to polish the kitchen stove, and, of course, I had to bake, and at the last moment I remembered that I had put my one pair of hemstitched linen sheets on the bed the night the presiding elder was with us the week before, so, of course, they must be washed. I said nothing to Charles about this latter contingency, only calling him to help me when I was ready to hang them on the line. It was a gray

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day and I was awfully afraid they would not get dry in time for me to iron them. I was so tired out that Charles compelled me to go and lie down after dinner. He promised to watch the sky and bring in the sheets at the first indication of rain.

In a little while it began to sprinkle, and, true to his word, he ran out and brought them in, but, as I had failed to give any further instructions, he was at a loss to know what to do with them. At last he thought about the banisters in the upper hall, so took them up there and spread them out. The banisters had not been dusted and the result is easily imagined. I cried a little, then went and put a fresh pair of muslin sheets on the bed which, Charles says, was what I ought to have done in the first place.

Cousin Caroline came at five that afternoon. I was too tired to be a model hostess and was glad when bedtime came. When I had gone with my guest to her room and chatted awhile, I told her that my room was just across the hall, and that if she needed anything, to feel no hesitancy in calling me. I had just thrown myself across the bed, declaring that I was too tired to undress, when I heard Cousin Caroline's door open; then she called, "Lucy, Lucy dear, have you gone to bed?" I hurried to see what she wanted and she explained: "I'm sorry to trouble you, child, but I never can sleep next to sheets in cool weather

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unless they are particularly old and soft. I have a pair of soft cotton blankets in my trunk to use when I am at a hotel. I thought if you had none handy, I would get them out." But I had a pair, thanks be! So I got them out and put them on.

Next day when she was drying the dishes for me, watching me struggle with the blacking on the bottoms of my pots and pans, she gave me this advice: "Don't use blacking on your stove; just rub it off good every day with an old newspaper and wash it once in a while. You will find it much more satisfactory"—just what I had been doing, but I had blackened it in honor of her visit. Moral: Don't upset all the ways of your household to meet what you think may be the expectations of your guest.

As to the eating: she doesn't care for any kind of "fix-ups," but enjoyed baked sweet potatoes, praised my buttermilk biscuits, and the home-cured ham Charles brought from the country. She doesn't care a fig for desserts except plain puddings and custards, so the cooking was easy, and after the first day I really enjoyed her visit.

By that time she had finished telling me of all the things I had done that I should have left undone, and began gently to suggest some of the things I ought to do. In the first place, she thought I ought to take piano lessons so that I could play for church services. It would make

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us practically independent in case of a contingency such as a quarrel in the choir : I could play, Charles could sing and then he could preach ; in fact, we would be "it," as the children say, and no thanks to anybody.

I didn't take very kindly to this suggestion, for, as I reminded her, my time was already quite occupied ; besides, we had no piano and no money with which to buy one.

She thought also that I ought to be president of the Ladies' Aid and the missionary societies, or at least take more active and aggressive part in the same. But there she met a tartar in the person of Charles, whose one particular hobby is that a minister's wife has no more call to public duty than any Christian woman in the congregation. In fact, he thinks she ought never to hold such offices, because she is not a fixture and may leave the work just at a time when experience is a necessary factor to cope with circumstances, and the new officer might thus be put to disadvantage and the society suffer. Then, too, if she be capable and aggressive, some would say she wants to run everything, while if she is modest and self-depreciating and waits for others to suggest, these same fault-finders will say they hope the next minister's wife will be of some help to them.

Cousin Caroline would get quite excited along

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these lines. They would argue and argue, then she would fly to work and make tea which we would drink to quiet our nerves, and then they would argue some more, and I would put in a word once in a while. One of Cousin Caroline's pet ideas is that a cup of tea is a panacea for all ills. Personally, I dote on five o'clock tea; I think it is such a nice sociable institution, giving one an opportunity to be hospitable at small expense and trouble. But Cousin Caroline must have tea upon all occasions—when she comes in from shopping, and when she has dusted the parlor, when she is excited, and when she is sad. While she was with us she always made the tea. She says I haven't learned to make it well yet and that it is an *art*. Charles says he hopes I'll be satisfied to make it in my own way and not cultivate the *art*, for he says his "innards" are as puckery as a green persimmon now, but his mind is at rest on one thing: if tannin poisoning were half as dangerous as the doctors make out, Cousin Caroline would have been dead years ago. However, in the main, Cousin Caroline and Charles got on beautifully. She is witty and wise; she is well read, a deep thinker, and a fine conversationalist.

We entertained the Chautauqua Circle while she was with us, also the Ladies' Aid. She made a fine impression on both. I overheard Sister

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Speedwell remark to Sister Green—"If we had a leader like her, we'd pay the church debt ourselves and never say 'Boo' to the men."

"Yes, indeed, she's a wheel horse or I miss my guess," Sister Green replied.

Cousin Caroline had just given us an elaborate account of an entertainment, a May-Day festival given by her home church last season, in which they won lasting laurels and netted over one hundred dollars. We are going right to work to get up one according to her plans and specifications.

I wish I did have some of her initiative (we'd both be better off). I can follow along pretty well, but I never invent anything, and I'm afraid I'll never start any reforms. Cousin Caroline undertook to institute several of the latter in our home and nearly brought me to grief, just as she did when she undertook to have me set the fashion in our little backwoods town when I was a wee girl.

Hoopskirts for little girls had gone out of fashion in the city, and short dresses—above the knees in fact—with pantalets buttoned just below, had come into vogue. These styles had not reached our little hamlet when Cousin Caroline, armed with a fashion plate, a paper pattern, and some pink chambray, arrived to change me from a demure sparrow to a gay bird of paradise.

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When she had arrayed me in the new finery she was so pleased with my appearance that she took the scissors and snipped off all my dresses and petticoats "round about" until I was like unto the other poor soul who cried, "Lackadaisy on me, this can't be I."

While I had Cousin Caroline to back me I got on fairly well, but I know no martyr ever walked to the stake feeling worse than I that first Sunday morning when I braved giggling girls and jeering boys on my way to class. Uncle Jim was the superintendent. He was an awful tease and could not resist so good an opportunity to employ his wit. The morning was a little cool so the children were all flocking around the stove. I did not stop but went straight to where our class always sat. Uncle Jim called me but I pretended not to hear. Presently he called again, "Come Lucy, come up and get warm." The children all turned and stared at me, so there seemed nothing to do but go. "Why, Lucy," Uncle Jim exclaimed, "Lucy Locket's lost her—no, boys, it ain't a pocket"—examining me carefully—"it's her *petticoats*" (in a stage whisper). "Children, run out and see if you can find them; it's too cold for the child to do without." I ran home crying. I didn't go back that Sunday nor for several more; although I soon had plenty of company in short dresses. I did not forgive

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Uncle Jim for years—not really until after he died, then I felt like I *had* to.

Well, as I started to say, Cousin Caroline came near getting me into a worse scrape in Patricia. Now, Patricia is not a city, it's just an old, very set-in-its-way, and very egotistical town. Whatever fashion it adopts is right because Patricians *say* it is right and custom makes it so. Perhaps one of the most trying of these customs upon newcomers is the one of dropping in to call at any hour of any day. Back in Hopewell we never looked for company on Monday or Saturday and *never* in the morning. But here no hour of any day is exempt. Cousin Caroline literally had a spell about this custom. She said we would never accomplish anything until we made our people see the error of their ways. She told us that she had counted as many as six times in one forenoon when Charles had been called from his study for unnecessary reasons, and that I was so often interrupted that I sometimes forgot what I planned for dinner, or did not have time in which to cook it.

We acknowledged the truth of all she said, but assured her that it was easier to point out the defects than to apply a remedy. But she thought not, was sure, in fact, that it would be the easiest thing in the world. The social obligations were to be disposed of at one fell swoop. Set aside

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one afternoon in the week. Wednesday was a good day, especially, as it was prayer meeting and more or less broken into anyway, so take Wednesday afternoon, from three until five. That would leave plenty of time for everybody to get home and have supper over before prayer meeting time. I could serve tea and wafers, thus dispensing hospitality and good cheer and setting a precedent easy for all pastors' wives to follow, as well as instituting a delightful custom for Patricia itself—setting a social pace, as it were.

Then as to Charles and his studies: he was to go to his study every morning immediately after breakfast and remain undisturbed (unless the house caught fire or some other like emergency called him) until eleven, when he would go for the mail, do my errands, and otherwise make himself useful until dinner time. From one o'clock until two he would be free to see anyone who wanted his advice. (He must state these things from the pulpit, also hang a printed card in the vestibule of the church.) From two o'clock until five he would be out visiting the sick, or calling upon his parishioners. When we had carried these suggestions into effect we were to find "Life flowing on in one grand, sweet song."

We did not purpose doing anything so rash as carrying out *all* of these suggestions, but the week after Cousin Caroline left we had so many

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interruptions that we began to think seriously of adopting *some* of them. Saturday morning had arrived and Charles had but just begun his sermon. Sister Sharon had been sick, so he had been compelled to take one morning to sweep and dust the church. When she is sick this work always falls to the minister's family, because the church feels that it cannot afford to hire any extra work; and if they take the money which is set aside for this purpose and pay some one else, they are taking the bread from Sister Sharon's mouth, so she is paid her usual wage and the minister (who is always a kind-hearted man with time going to waste) does the work free, gratis, for nothing.

One whole morning had been taken up with a funeral, while a fire down in the business section had consumed another, and so on until, as I said, Saturday morning had found the sermon but just begun. We talked matters over at the breakfast table and decided that I was to stand guard, admitting no one. Neither was I to call him on any pretext whatsoever, a life and death case alone being exempt.

At a quarter after ten the doorbell rang. I glanced at my bread, which was rising, put a stick of wood in the stove, washed my hands, and hurried to the door, untying my apron and leaving it on the dining-room floor as I went. At

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the door I found Mrs. Joseph Steed. Now, I don't know Mrs. Steed very well (or didn't then), and I was knocked almost speechless when she planted both hands on my shoulders and kissed me. The smack resounded through the hall; in fact, Charles declares he heard it distinctly and nearly choked himself cramming his handkerchief in his mouth to keep from laughing aloud.

I asked her in and led the way to the living room, but before she was seated she explained, "I did not come to call this morning, I only wanted to see Brother Sherwood on a matter of business, to ask his advice, in fact."

I explained that Mr. Sherwood was very busy and had asked me not to disturb him this morning, but if the message was important and she cared to leave it with me, I would deliver it as soon as he came down from his study. If she had been turning into an icicle she could not have stiffened more perceptibly. I tried to thaw her out, but, as I said, I was not very well acquainted with her, so did not know by just what avenues she might best be approached; however, I tried the weather, the beauties of Patricia in the spring-time, the probable success of the coming entertainment, etc., and still she did not enthuse. When I was silent a moment trying to think whether or not the Steeds have any children

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about whom I might ask, she took advantage of the pause to arise, drawing her cape around her frigid shoulders in an even more frigid manner, and moved toward the door saying: "I am very sorry not to have seen Brother Sherwood. I particularly needed his advice in the matter of letting Claudius go with the ball team to Berryville. They will be gone all night, and one never knows what kind of people they might be thrown with; then, too, there is the danger of getting hurt to be considered, and all of these things, together with the fear that he may be tempted to smoke or to use profane or vulgar language. All of these things, I say, are a great worry to a mother who is anxious to do her duty, and I feel that Brother Sherwood ought to be able to help me."

"But," I suggested, "don't you think that, after all, you and Mr. Steed are the proper persons to decide matters of that kind? What does his father say about the matter?"

"O, he says that if Claudius belongs to the team, he'll have to go when the team goes, and play when the team plays, and come home when the team comes, and take such knocks and bruises as fall to his share."

"Then I am sure Mr. Sherwood would not meddle in the matter, and you have lost nothing in not having seen him," I replied, rather coolly,

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for by this time the frigidity in the atmosphere was beginning to penetrate to *my* backbone.

"Probably not," she returned; "anyway, I must be going. I've made you rather a long call, considering that it is Saturday morning and that I didn't come to see *you*." She went down the steps fairly radiating icicles.

I had reached the dining room, stopped to pick up my apron and was tying it on when the bell rang again. I was half a mind not to answer it. I didn't, in fact, until it rang the second time; then I knew that if I did not, Charles would, so I took off my apron again and went. This time it was old Brother Smith. I literally shook in my shoes, for, as Tom says, "I saw my finish."

He shook hands very cordially, saying: "Howdy do, Sister Sherwood, howdy do? Is Brother Sherwood in his study? Well, I'll go right up. I'm in a great hurry."

Now, I knew all about Brother Smith's "hurrys." I knew they usually last from an hour to an hour and a half, and leave Charles ready to go to bed with nervous exhaustion—so I was determined to circumvent him. I stepped between him and the stairs, saying as I did so: "One minute, Brother Smith; let me explain the situation: Mr. Sherwood has been very busy this week and has been unable to prepare his work for to-morrow—this is his last opportunity.

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He has asked me to allow no one to interrupt him."

"But this is important," was the reply. "I want him to go with me to visit a poor man who is in jail. You know what our Saviour said about being 'in prison, and ye visited me not.'"

"Some other time," I began, "I am sure, he will be glad to go, but—"

"But all time belongs to the Lord," he interrupted. "*Now* is the day of salvation. We don't know that any of us will be here *to-morrow* to listen to a sermon."

I saw that I would only waste time and multiply words to no effect, so I opened the door as invitingly as I knew how and remarked that I would tell Mr. Sherwood at dinner that he had called, adding that if he had any special message to leave with me, I would deliver it. He took the hint and descended the steps with an air akin to Sister Steed's.

It was now after eleven o'clock. My kitchen fire was out, my bread had run over, my disorderly kitchen got on my nerves. "Well," I ejaculated, "I have tried to please everybody, pleased nobody, and shall have sour bread in the bargain, thanks to *one* of Cousin Caroline's perfectly lovely plans! But perhaps," I sighed, resignedly, "Charles may have bread for the souls of his people, which I suppose is of vastly more import."

IV

JUNE 20. In looking over my diary I find it has been more than two months since I have written a word, but the days have been full if the pages have been empty; probably that is the chief reason why they have remained so.

In the first place, we have moved. Knowing that the Edgemonts would be back the first of June, we began early in May looking for a suitable location, which we found almost immediately and secured, although we had to pay almost a month's rent before we moved in; we were so afraid some one else might get it. There is but one objection to the house and that is the fact that it is painted blue. It is an old, old place, but has been recently all done over with fresh paper and paint, also new porches and a store-room added.

Aside from the house there are two attractions, both of which are old and rich in possibilities: the one is a garden, the other a colored mammy. The garden appealed to Charles, the mammy to me.

When we went over the first time to look at the place we noticed the little cabin, not ten feet

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from the house, and supposed it was a smoke-house, as it was closed and fastened with a pad-lock. But when Charles went to see the owner he told him that he only rented the place with the understanding that Mammy Sue and her cabin were to be undisturbed.

"You see," he explained, "she's the last of her family; she belonged to my father, and I promised him to see that she always had shelter and food. She is old and childish and positively refuses to live anywhere but in that cabin. Sometimes she will come to my house and stay a day or two, but the first thing we know she 'pikes' straight back to the cabin."

We assured him that we were delighted to have her there, for now I knew I should not be afraid nor lonely when Charles would be out in the evening. Neither would I need to ask some one to stay with me when he went to the country, for I could sit by my bedroom window and talk with her. She has taken quite a fancy to me, always calls me "honey," and loves to talk to me about her "white folks."

Poor Mrs. Edgemont isn't any better. They only came back to pack their goods and ship them to her mother's. They have gone to Denver. She gave me so many things—bits of odd china and glass, pictures, lamps, rugs. She gave Charles a morris chair and some bookcases.

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In fact, our five rooms are quite comfortably and nicely furnished and we have only bought one bed and a few chairs. This is such a nice, quiet, restful place that I am sure I shall soon get to feeling better. I haven't been well for some time; I overtaxed myself working when we had that festival the first of May. I worked so hard beforehand that I was unable to be there when the "great day came." Sister Sharon stayed with me (for, of course, Charles had to go). Some of the sisters were quite angry because she wouldn't go and wash dishes. She confided to me that she was "tickled to death" to have an excuse not to do it.

"Let 'em do it themselves," she went on; "they ain't none too good. Not that I mind doin' the dishes, land knows, but it's the *principle*—they always *expect* me to wash dishes, same as they always used to expect Mis' Molly Winters to bile the ham. Every doin's for years Molly 'd biled the ham. Finally we had a new minister whose wife didn't know about Molly and the ham-bilin', and she was one of them kind too that you may say sets out to run things, so she decided to have a supper on 'lection night, and when we got done plannin' for it, she says: 'Dear me, we ain't provided for the ham. 'Who'll we git to bile it?' Mis' Jedge Small spoke right up and says: 'O, Molly Winter will do it; she's allus

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glad to do it to git the grease.' Molly wa'n't there, but there's allus somebody ready to carry a bone, 'specially if Mis' Small dropped it, so Molly wa'n't long in hearin' it, and, of course, she didn't bile the ham *then* nor *sence*."

Charles ran down every little bit to tell me how things were going. We were very anxious about this affair, for we considered it a sort of keystone or cornerstone, or, at least, an important milestone on our way toward freedom from debt.

The ladies confidently expected to make one hundred dollars. Mr. Blair agreed to duplicate whatever we made, and Mr. Van Alstyne promised to pay as much as Mr. Blair did. Judge Small has said all along that he will pay the last one hundred dollars, when the other nine hundred are raised, so if we made one hundred, we felt that we could count four hundred. That would leave only six hundred to raise. Charles told us that he would put in five dollars so as to make it five hundred and ninety-five, because that sounds so much less, and then he would start out and raise it by popular subscription, and that the ladies might have all the rest our society could raise toward fixing up the church, getting a new carpet, and such things as are needed to make us look nice and prosperous before the jubilee, which he proposes to hold the last Sun-

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day before Conference. He has been talking with the official board about having a great public meeting when the debt shall be paid off, invite all the old pastors, have the mortgage burned, and, in short, have a general time of thanksgiving. They all say, "Yes, yes, that will be just the thing," but I doubt if one of them really expects the thing to occur; although now, as the debt grows a little smaller each week, they begin to talk differently. Judge Small told me last week that he was looking up his bank account, so that when we called on him for that last one hundred dollars he would be ready. That last one hundred dollars has been a standing promise with the judge for years, and it is evident he never expected to be called upon to pay it. October the first is the time Charles has set to pay everything and hold the jubilee.

But about the festival: We had a great big generous "feed" for twenty-five cents; then we had ten booths with all kinds of things to sell. Everywhere the Maypole was in evidence, and the girls who waited on tables and presided over booths were all dressed in white and wore garlands of flowers. We netted one hundred and ten dollars from the whole, and the papers said of it that it was the prettiest affair ever given in Patricia. When we took the money up to Mr. Blair to count, he sort o' cleared up his throat

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and asked, "From which bank did you borrow it?" After which he whirled around to his desk and wrote a check for one hundred and ten dollars. We thanked him profusely, then went to call on Mr. Van Alstyne, who, true to his word, duplicated Mr. Blair's check; so we had three hundred and thirty dollars to put in the bank. When I went home and told Charles, he threw up his hat and gave three cheers for the Ladies' Aid and for Cousin Caroline, who had enthused said Aid and thus started the ball rolling.

JUNE 25. I've just discovered one of the reasons of Charles's great popularity with the ladies of his congregation. I was cleaning his "visiting coat" this morning and his little red book dropped out of his pocket. Now, I have never before examined the little book, although I frequently saw Charles refer to it and knew that it contained his visiting list and all sorts of memoranda. But when I picked it up instead of putting it back in the pocket I opened it, and these are some of the things I saw:

"Smith, J. W.—Carriage-maker—lives in suburbs—has six children. Johnnie Junior, fourteen, very fond of baseball, captain of his team. Susie, twelve, fond of housework—brought me in some cake she had baked (must remember to speak of it next time)—baby sick.

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"Smyth, Andrew—Grocer—lives corner Ninth and Oak—can't remember boy's name (must find out)—girl named Ella May, very fond of dolls—has large one she calls Angelina.

"Smythe, Clarence B.—Lawyer—have no children—Mrs. Smythe is having trouble with her eyes—has an Angora cat named Cupid and a poodle she calls Dick."

"Did I ever! Well, of all things with which to fill a book of pastoral calls!" I exclaimed as I laid the same on the desk where Charles sat writing.

"O, you see," he explained, "that's an aid to my treacherous memory. It would never do to confound Smith and Smyth and Smythe. Just imagine what would be to pay were I to ask plain Mrs. John W. Smith how the Angora cat was faring, or inquired of Mrs. Clarence B. how Johnnie was enjoying the baseball season. No, indeed, I never take any such risks, and until I get very well acquainted I always take out my little book before I reach a neighborhood and run over the names, and so forth. You see," he added, laughingly, "there are tricks in all trades."

"Yes, in all *trades*, and in all professions, except *ours*. I thought, surely, the sacred cloth was exempt," I replied.

"It can't very well be as long as we are human," he responded. "Do you think for a

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moment that a woman is going to hustle around getting herself and her family off to church to hear a man preach who cannot remember whether she has *two* children or *six*? Not much!"

I admitted that he spoke the truth. Take, for instance, my own dilemma in the matter of Sister Lewis and Sister Pierce: I never can remember "which is t'other" unless I meet them together, and even then I forget which is a widow by natural consequences, and which carries the prefix "grass"; so, of course, conversation between us is somewhat limited. "I believe," I told him, "I will get me a little book, note down the features and peculiarities of each, and see if I do not get on better; but," I added as an afterthought, "I have no pocket in which to carry it. I might tie a string to it and wear it around my neck."

However, Charles refuses to be teased about his little red book. He calls it his "sure, safe, and speedy guide to popular favor."

JULY 28. I have only a few minutes time to spare, for I am getting ready to go home for a visit and am very busy. I do hate to leave Charles, but I am anxious to see mother and the family. I wanted mother to come and visit us. She did talk of it, but finally the family decided it was best for me to come there, so that they could all see me. Emily leaves for Boston in September to enter upon her two years' course in the Con-

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servatory. Tom hardly thinks it worth while to enter upon the practice of law in Hopewell, so he is going to start West in a few weeks. For the present Will remains at home with mother, but it is not probable that he will be long content there, for Hopewell doesn't offer much to an ambitious young physician. I, somehow, feel that this may be the last visit we will all have under the old roof in a long time. I have decided to spend the month of August at home. I want to get back in order to be here during the closing of the debt-raising campaign, and when the society orders the new carpet and pulpit furniture. They are going to have a garden party in two weeks. I hate to miss that.

Mammy Sue is going to cook for Charles, so I know he will be well cared for, but I suspect he will find it pretty lonely.

OCTOBER 8. This is the first time that I have drawn a long breath in weeks. It certainly is a blessing that we do not know beforehand what we must pass through, or we would never be able to "pass."

The first few days after I got home I had a beautiful time. Charles wrote me what purported to be cheerful letters—one every day, sometimes two—but I could read between the lines, and once in a while he struck a doleful note open and aboveboard. Then there came

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two days in which I did not hear a word; I was nearly wild; I sent a telegram to Brother Peace asking after Charles, and he wrote me by return mail. He said that Charles was not well, but was not seriously sick and did not want me to come home. I got my belongings together in a hurry and took the first train toward Patricia. Eugene Mac Carter was at the house paying Emily a farewell visit. He and Emily went with me to the city and saw me on my train.

When I reached home I found Charles very ill with nervous prostration. They had sent a telegram to me after I left Hopewell. I nursed him myself. I had Mammy Sue take charge of the house. Sister Peace, Mrs. Van Alstyne and, in fact, all the members came and helped or offered to do so.

There still lacked a little over one hundred dollars on the debt and that worried him a great deal, so Brother Peace started out one day and did not come back until he raised it. Then he got Judge Small's check and put the full amount in the bank and came and told us. From that minute, it seemed to me, Charles began to get better. He was very weak and improved so slowly that we did not know whether or not he would be able to go to Conference.

We had to give up the plans for the jubilee. I had to send a notice to the church paper and

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write all the ministers whom Charles had invited. He took the disappointment very philosophically. He said perhaps it was better; so many older men had been unsuccessful in their plans to pay the debt that they might think he was trying to "show off."

There seems to be quite a little prejudice against the young men of the Conference. It seems very wicked to me, but Charles says, "Wait till we are old; then we shall understand how it seems to have some young 'whipper-snapper' come in and upset all the plans of 'mice and men,' snap their fingers at tradition, and all that sort of thing."

I am not worrying about anything in the dim, distant future, I have troubles of my own here and now. Dr. Ames came over the evening before Charles started to Conference and had a long talk with me, or *to* me rather, for he did the talking. I did the listening and was too frightened to even say, "Yes, sir," "No, sir," or "If you please."

He told me that Charles was in a very critical condition, but not necessarily serious, if he would only take the medicine prescribed. He said he ought really to give up all mental work for a year and take a complete rest; says that coming to such strenuous work, with two sermons a week to prepare, and coming right from college, where

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he had been carrying two years' work in one, has used up his nervous energy and, as a consequence, his whole system is crying out for rest.

Charles has told him frankly that he has no means upon which to live for a year, that he has a wife, and that he must take work. So Dr. Ames has modified the prescription to fit the necessities of the case. He says, "Take a quiet little country circuit for a year or two, use your old sermons, get out and dig in the dirt, read enough to keep from rusting, but for the most part be an old-fashioned country circuit rider, only don't have too many preaching points—not more than three or four."

Charles, so Dr. Ames told me, made more excuses than the men spoken of in the Bible when bidden to the feast, not that he cared so much on his own account as on mine, although it would be quite a humiliation to take what would seem a lower step in the Conference, and would be much harder to get a better position should the time come when he is able to fill it.

When Dr. Ames told me all these things I laid the law down to Charles in good, plain English and made him promise me to tell Dr. Westcoat, our presiding elder, that he was "jes' nachally honin'," as Mammy Sue says, for a country circuit. Then he talked to me very seriously about what a circuit would be like: he would have to

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be away from home quite a little; the people would be good but probably uneducated and narrow-minded; also, although some of them might have plenty of money, they would live in a way we would think impossible—what we considered necessities they would look upon as luxuries and think we ought to do without. We would probably not get more than four hundred, perhaps not more than three hundred and fifty dollars, counting dried apples and pumpkins, for the whole year's work. After all this did I still say "circuit"? Remembering all that Dr. Ames had said, I answered "Yes" without blinking an eye, although I sincerely wished that we had the money upon which to live until Charles was strong, or knew where we could borrow it, or had hope that some unknown friend might leave us a legacy.

I think this has been one of the longest weeks I ever saw. Charles told me not to do anything toward the packing until he came, but I just had to have something to do, so I have packed most of our clothing and such other things as go in trunks, and have dusted and wrapped the pictures, china, and bric-a-brac.

Everybody knows that we are to leave Patricia, consequently I have had a great many callers and have invitations for dinners and suppers every day from the time Charles comes home till

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the day we leave. I have promised Sister Peace to spend the last night there. I am glad it is to be so, for theirs is more like home to me than any other home in Patricia. Mother could not have been any better to me than Sister Peace has been, nor given me more kindly advice. When I am perplexed or in trouble I always run to her, especially since we moved to the little blue house. When we were upon the Avenue it was so far to walk that I did not go so often, and I missed the visits greatly.

I dread to leave Patricia. If we could only have stayed here four or five years, we might have done something for the church and also accumulated something in the way of worldly goods. As it is, it will probably take every penny that we have saved to pay our moving expenses. Before long we will need some articles of clothing. So far, we have bought nothing in the line except two pairs of socks for Charles before he started to Conference. His old ones had all been darned, and as I do not darn very neatly, I thought I would rather not have them on exhibition in case he shared the room with some brother, as he says they almost always do, because the homes are taxed to entertain so many guests and they cannot give each a separate room. Perhaps some time I may go with him; quite a number of the ministers' wives do go.

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OCTOBER 15. We leave at ten-thirty o'clock this morning for Pleasant Center (sounds good). Will write more about it when I find whether or not it is as good as it sounds. I have only a few moments now while I am waiting for Charles to come with some rope for the last trunk. I must stick this in before he is ready to lock it. All our goods have gone—nothing but trunks in the house. I am sitting on one, writing and using my knee for a rest, just saying good-by to the little house and to Patricia—dear old, queer old, kind old Patricia! Last night, at Brother Peace's, we had the most beautiful surprise. I thought Sister Peace was having supper unusually late and felt it to be too bad when first one and then another kept dropping in to tell us good-by and chat awhile. I feared it would discommode Sister Peace and make her supper late.

Presently she came to the door and invited everybody out to supper. When we entered the dining room we found all the older members of the church were present, even including Sister Sharon and Mrs. Mollie Winter. Everybody did full justice to the supper; but even above that was the feast of sociability.

After supper the young people came. We had music and a few charades, but very soon they began to get ready to go, in order that we might

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get to bed for a good night's rest. At the last we all sang "Blest be the tie that binds," and then began the good-bys. Almost all the women cried, and the men shook hands with that peculiar grip that winds itself around the heartstrings until you never can forget it—but here comes Charles. I must stick you, my diary, in the trunk—so here's good-by once more to beautiful old Patricia.

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OCTOBER 30. When I spread open the pages of this book this evening I could see just one picture—the big vacant room in the little blue house, Mammy Sue in the center holding Charles by one hand and me with the other. She had been crying, but had dried her eyes and put on her brightest turban. “Chillun,” she was saying, “you-all must ’member dat dis yere life what you-all done sot out fo’ to lead am des’ nachally full ob howdy an’ good-by. Right soon you-all gwine come to de howdy place agin, an’ hit ain’t noways fitten fo’ to say howdy wid a long face.”

I am positive that no advice carried away from Patricia, or delivered to us by the sages of the Conference, or sent us in voluminous letters by the home folks, sank half as deep into our subconscious minds as this bit of homely philosophy from Mammy Sue—“Hit ain’ no ways fitten fo’ to say howdy wid a long face.”

It was ten o’clock at night when we arrived at Pleasant Center. The conductor was very kind—came to us some time before the train whistled and told us that the next stop would be Pleasant

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Center, and advised us to have our baggage all in readiness, as the train made a very short stop.

We began to gather bags and baggage and were ready to get to our feet when the train began to blow—that long, mournful, screechy whistle it always blows when you are going to a new home. If you are going back to college after the first year, or home on a vacation, or even to the city on a pleasure trip, that whistle fairly howls with joy, but nothing I have ever heard causes my heart to sink like the whistle that says, “New home—new faces—new responsibilities.”

As we started down the aisle Charles looked over his shoulder to say, “Remember Mammy Sue.” It was a beautiful moonlight night, and as we stepped out into the clear, crisp air despondency seemed to fall from me in a moment. We were greatly surprised to find the platform filled with people. As soon as we alighted we were met by a fine-looking gentleman, a regular man-of-the-world business individual, who introduced himself, shook hands warmly, then, turning, waved his hat to the crowd saying: “Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to introduce to you our new pastor and his wife. It is entirely too late an hour for personal introductions, but Mrs. Mansfield and I shall expect to see each of you and your friends at our home to-morrow evening at seven-thirty for that purpose.”



"What promise does it bring to mind, dearie?"

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We found Mrs. Mansfield as genial and hospitable as her husband. They are from near Chicago. Mr. Mansfield has large lumber interests here, or near here, in the mountains. They have two lovely children and a beautiful home.

Next morning as soon as we were dressed we went out on the upper portico to get a view of the town, but were so taken with the landscape that we forgot to look at the town. I have never seen anything so beautifully sublime as these mountains. Just now they are clad in crimson and gold, and each huge peak, as it stands out alone with the morning sun glinting against its sides, is a veritable bouquet. For a long time we watched the purple mist rising, the white clouds floating against the sides and hovering over the top. Then Charles drew me to him as he asked, "What promise does it bring to mind, dearie?" And I answered, "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever."

After breakfast we went to look at the church and at the house they had rented for us to live in until the parsonage is built. They have the lumber on the ground to build the parsonage and promise to have it done in a few weeks, consequently I am not much interested in the house where we are to sojourn temporarily. We shall

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not attempt to fix up or unpack anything not actually needed until we get permanently settled in the parsonage.

I must say a word about the town. It certainly is a contrast to Patricia: there everything was old and staid and set; here everything is new and live and changing. The place is aptly named—it is pleasant and it is a center. This is one of the most beautiful little valleys in the State. The mountains are on three sides and the other slopes away to the river. Until five years ago such towns as were in the valley were located on the river in order to have communication with the outside world, but to open up a large territory rich in ore and timber two great railways have recently entered the valley, and, at the point where they intersect, the little town of Pleasant Center is situated. The people are from every section—North, South, East, and West—some seeking health and all looking for the almighty dollar. Everything is so spick-and-span new that in walking over the town one has very much the feeling of calling on the bride before the new has worn off the furniture. Every house is neat with its coat of fresh paint, and no pickets are off the fences and no gates off the hinges.

Of course the church is new too. There are three churches; they are all new, and look very simple and unpretending as compared with the

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churches back in the older settled part of the State.

Charles will have four outside appointments, but will only be gone two Sundays in each month, as he will preach on Sunday morning at one point and in the evening at another, only giving each point one service a month.

We feel that we are going to like our people here, in fact, *all* the people very much. They seem like a great family with common interests. When they had the reception for us at the Mansfields' the thing that impressed me most was the seeming lack of "who's who" in the atmosphere. Back in Hopewell we were usually satisfied when we found out who you were before you were married and what business your husband engaged in before he came among us. These points satisfactorily adjusted, Hopewell took you to her heart. Not so Patricia: Patricia stands with her hands behind her and requires you to read your pedigree from the first man down, without the quiver of an eyelash. This feat accomplished, you may be admitted to society "on probation"—unless you have *loads* of money. Money covers a multitude of shortcomings in Patricia. What am I saying? We had no money, yet Patricia loved us and was kind to us. Yes, but we had *position*. I know I should not want to live in Patricia if I had

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neither money nor position, but I don't believe I should mind dropping right down into the heart of Pleasant Center and canvassing for books, if I *had* to.

Take the matter of dress. I saw at the reception some as handsome gowns as one sees anywhere. Some of the ladies go to Louisville or Cincinnati for the latest in everything. But right beside such a one may be a plain little woman wearing a gown fashioned by her dress-maker "back home" two or three years ago. She probably experiences regret at being out of fashion, but she knows that the material is good and that the cut *was* fashionable when it was made, so what's the use of letting such a trifle spoil her evening? Consequently she sets about making herself so agreeable that people never think of the dress, leastways that's how it impresses me. I know I never saw so many clever and agreeable people in one small company.

NOVEMBER 20. Charles has been filling some of his country appointments. He says it is like the pictures of "before and after taking" to come from the farthest-back point to town, and that it certainly proves the value of the railroad as a civilizer. He tells such ridiculous tales of things he sees and hears (only to me, of course) that I hardly know when he is telling gospel truth

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and when he is imposing on my credulity. But he declares the following to be the actual truth: He spent the night with a farmer who owns more than one hundred acres of rich river-bottom land and who has built a fairly respectable two-story house, which is kept closed and locked while the family live in a two-room cabin in which they went to housekeeping nearly twenty-five years ago. There is a "loft," and also a lean-to has been added to the original cabin. Charles says he slept in the "loft" and bumped his head against the rafters whenever he raised his head in bed. After breakfast they were walking around the farm when he asked if the new house was near completion. He was astonished to learn that it had been finished for over two years. He says they are saving it for weddings and funerals, but that the very first piece of missionary work he has set himself to do is to move that family into that new house.

I must not forget to speak of the new addition to our family. We have a horse—have it rented for its "victuals and clothes," as Mr. Mansfield says. Charles had to have some means of getting back and forth to his appointments. To hire a horse every time was expensive. One of the farmers said he had a horse, perfectly good but old, not fit to work, just standing around idle, which, if he would drive, he might have and wel-

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come. Two other farmers agreed to furnish the feed, while a friend here in town came forward with the loan of a buggy. Charles thought he ought to be able to provide the "clothes" (harness), so behold us provided with a conveyance and a conveyor. Charles forgot to ask the name of the steed, but that was immaterial, for the first time he drove down town with him the men attended to that matter.

Most men would have skulked around back ways with such an outfit. Not so Charles—he loves fun too well; consequently he selected the main business street of town, leaned back, crossed his legs, let the lines fall loosely over the old horse's back, and set out to enjoy himself. Pretty soon some man spied the old horse creeping along at a snail's pace, and emitted a guffaw which brought the clan. They slapped each other on the back and yelled, they threw things at the old horse, but he plodded along the even tenor of his way. Charles lifted his hat, bowing to right and left, upon which the populace gave three rousing cheers for the parson, and three for his good steed "Lightning," and "Lightning" the old horse has continued to be called.

One of the men told Charles that if he ever expected to get as far as Smith's Chapel (the nearest appointment, only five miles out), he would better start by "sunup," take his dinner,

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and drive up "right peart," in order to get there for the evening service. Then by driving home in the moonlight he could be here for breakfast.

A few nights ago, however, we had a pretty serious time with Lightning. We had only just fallen asleep when we heard the most awful racket out about the stable, a sound as though the stable were being made into kindling-wood, and after this the most unearthly groans. Charles dressed in a hurry and ran out to the stable. I threw my bathrobe around me, pulled on my slippers and ran out to the back porch. Presently Charles came back to say that he thought the poor old beast had been overfeeding and was suffering from colic; he didn't exactly know what to do for colic, but he knew that heat was good and that the horse ought to be exercised. He had me get a couple of strips of old carpet, that I keep on the floor in the kitchen, and heat them by holding them around the coal stove in the living room. I would heat one piece which he would wrap around the poor beast, leading him around and around the house, until I would carry out the hot strip to exchange, and so on *ad infinitum* until I nearly went to sleep standing over the stove, and Charles declared he had been walking in his sleep for hours when poor old Lightning began to show signs of getting easy.

We slept late next morning and were just eat-

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ing breakfast when some one rapped at the back door. Charles was sitting near the door, so he got up and opened it. A grizzly old countryman was in waiting. He greeted Charles with, "Howdy, Bud? Where's your pappy?" I never wanted to scream so badly in all my life. But I dared not. It will always be a source of deep regret to me that I could not have seen Charles's face at that moment, but his wits work quickly, so that before I could even wonder what reply he would make he asked: "Were you looking for the pastor? If so, I'm your man."

"You!" ejaculated the man, "you!" It is impossible to put on paper the surprise, the contempt, the utter disgust implied in that exclamation.

But I never can have any fun teasing Charles. However, I thought to myself, "Now, young man, I'm going to pay some of my old scores." Accordingly, when the opportune time seemed to have arrived, at a large social gathering, I was telling it with great gusto to a group of ladies, when Charles put in an appearance demanding to know what the fun was about. (I think he smelled a mouse.) For answer they all accosted him with: "Howdy, Bud? Where's your pappy?" Charles never changed expression—just waited for the noise to subside, then asked, "Do you want to know what made him do it?"

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"We certainly do," they all cried in chorus.

"Well," he answered, pointing to me, "she was sitting right facing the man when I opened the door, and he naturally supposed the 'old man' was around somewhere."

I made a dive for him, but he had headed for the other side of the room. I shall not repeat the story in public again.

DECEMBER 15. We are nicely settled in the new parsonage and are keeping a servant. Think of the extravagance! But it seems as though I just have to have some one to stay with me when Charles is away.

True, I always had invitations, even more than I could accept, but we felt it was imposing on the people to be "boarding around" so much; then, too, I need some one to get the wood and water, run errands and do many other things when Charles is gone. I found I could get a little colored girl for fifty cents a week and her board. I don't feel at all afraid here and could stay alone, but Charles is not satisfied to leave me that way, so we engaged Cynthia, a very good-natured tractable darkey. She goes home nights when Charles is here, but when he is away sleeps on a cot in my room.

We are enjoying the parsonage very much; everything is so clean and smells so new and fresh. We have five rooms and two nice porches.

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As soon as we were settled the citizens came and gave us a house-warming. They brought things needed about the house, also articles for our personal use and quite a quantity of provisions, none of which, however, were *counted on salary*. Speaking of provisions, the funniest thing happened one day last week. I was here alone when I heard some one at the front gate call, "Hello! hello, you-all!" I went to the front door and saw a man on horseback holding a large coarse sack in front of him.

"Howdy?" he called. "Is this where the preacher lives?" I answered that it was where the *Methodist* preacher lived.

"Well, he's the one I'm lookin' for. We killed hogs yisterday, an' I've got the backbones an' ribs out o' twelve of 'em here. I've toted 'em 'round tryin' to sell 'em till I'm tired, an' I thought if I had to *give* 'em to anybody, I'd *give 'em to the preacher.*"

While he was making this explanation he was alighting and shouldering the sack, which he brought and deposited on the front porch, saying, "Brother Sherwood can fetch the sack home next time he comes to Pleasant Grove." I did not even ask the man his name, I was too dumfounded. I was still standing there gazing at that sack and wondering what I was going to do with the contents, when I heard the gate click

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and looked up to face Charles, who asked, "What have we here?"

"A pig in a poke," I answered. "Several of them, rather, or pieces of them." When I had explained the matter and had described the man and the "nag," about which he questioned me, he said it was our friend of the hundred-acre river bottom farm and the new house (which house is still unoccupied despite the eloquence of my husband).

When he had surveyed the sack and had whistled awhile, he went in the house and brought out a pan, after which he untied the sack and took out as much of the meat as he thought we might eat, then retied the sack.

I asked him what he was going to do with it, and he answered, "Hitch up my good steed, Lightning, and go out into the highways and byways and *compel* my friends and neighbors to dine upon backbone and ribs at my expense."

"O no, not at your *expense*," I corrected; "he said, that if he had to *give* it to anybody, he would *give* it to the preacher."

"Just the same, I'll give about two dollars, in good gospel sermons, for the contents of this sack," he replied, "which, seeing the good brother only agreed to pay five dollars for the entire year, and counting that the other three will doubtless be paid in dried apples and pumpkins, considering

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all these things, I say, I can but feel that I am giving away a goodly amount of good gray matter with these same bones. But," he added, after a moment's reflection, "seeing that the sermons have been preached and paid for, and are, as you may say, second-hand, I reckon the dear brother is paying for all he gets."

VI

MARCH 5. Such a long time since I opened this book, but nothing very special has happened. This afternoon I entertained the Ladies' Aid; I don't believe I've ever said a word about the Ladies' Aid. It is the most peculiar and delightful institution I ever saw. The town is so small and the churches so many that there are not enough active ladies in any one church to make a respectable showing as a society, so they got together, talked the matter over, and decided to organize the Pleasant Center Improvement Society. All the influential ladies of the town joined it. They decided that their first aid was to be extended to the churches—a like sum to be expended upon each church built in the town.

The first church built was the Baptist. The ladies bought the pulpit furniture, also a Bible and hymn book for the pulpit, and the chandeliers.

The Presbyterians built next and received the same help, then the Methodists. After this they began again with the Baptists, giving them fifty dollars toward an organ. They were just preparing for a fair, which they were to have before Christmas, when we arrived in October. This

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fair was to pay the last fifty dollars on an organ for our church.

I was initiated into the society by paying ten cents as dues and having the "creed" and the constitution read to me. Most of the creed was an amusing jumble of we believe and we don't believe, which passed out of mind as soon as it was read excepting the last item, which made an impression that, as Mammy Sue would say, "stuck in the craw." Here it is: "We believe that only evil comes of gossip; therefore we abhor gossip and banish it from our midst. If, while this society is assembled, any member shall indulge in said vice she shall be fined the sum of five cents. Also any lady or ladies aiding and abetting said offender by listening to said gossip shall be fined a like sum."

I always rather dreaded Ladies' Aid afternoon, but this one was delightful. All the ladies were employed with work of some kind which they were preparing for the fair. They knitted, crocheted, hemstitched, embroidered, pieced quilts; in fact they did any sort of work not requiring a machine. All such work is taken home by some of the ladies and done there, for at the society some one is appointed each time to read while the others work. We read the current magazines and once in a while the latest new book.

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At the first meeting I, being new, had met very few of the ladies outside our own church, but I was soon one of them. Mrs. Mansfield and Mrs. Carter called for me, and we went early so as to give them an opportunity of introducing me to the ladies as they came. I was glad, for I do hate above all things to go into a room full of strange ladies and be handed around like the platter of cold ham at a dinner. In this instance, I had time to do something besides bow and say, "Mrs. Green, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Brown" before it was time for the society to "convene."

They were several minutes late, for they kept waiting for Mrs. Powers. I heard so much of Mrs. Powers that I concluded she must indeed be a "power." When the president took out her watch and remarked, "It's five minutes past time; I don't see what *can* be keeping Mrs. Powers," one of the ladies suggested that she might be delayed on account of the baby. "You know, he had the croup last night," put in another. "And Willie is still carrying his arm in a sling; I don't see how the child *could* have broken it just falling off a porch, when he's fallen out of treetops forty times if he's fallen once."

"Maybe she isn't coming," some one ventured. "O yes, she is, she told me so this morning. Let's wait a little while; it's so hard for her to get off. If any of you are in a hurry to begin your work,

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just get it out; we can put it by when we get ready to open the meeting. For my part, I could be cutting strips to set these quilt pieces together if I knew how it would be best to do it. Would you set it with strips or squares? Ought they to be cut on the square or on the bias?"

"Dear me," answered the woman appealed to, "don't ask me. Wait till Mrs. Powers comes; she'll know."

Just then Mrs. Smith came over to Mrs. Mansfield, exhibiting a pair of infant booties she was crocheting, and asked: "Do you think these are large enough, or would you ravel them out and do them over? Clara thinks they are too small," she concluded.

Mrs. Mansfield examined them a moment, then handed them back, saying: "I really am afraid to advise you about them. I am so poor a judge in such matters. I'd ask Mrs. Powers before I unraveled them."

"Do tell me who *is* Mrs. Powers; I'm dying of curiosity to see her; she must be a marvel of knowledge and efficiency," I ejaculated.

Mrs. Mansfield laughed. "She's all of that and more. She's one of the most charming women I have ever known. She's the wife of the Baptist minister, the mother of eight children, and—"

But at this point the mother of eight entered.

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As soon as I saw her hair, I knew I should love her. It's strange how you can tell a woman's temperament, disposition, or present state of mind by the way she does her hair. Take the woman who *habitually* draws her hair back from her face and twists it in a hard little knot at the back of her head so tightly that it draws all the oil from the roots and leaves her forehead bald and shiny, and somehow, you seem to know that all the oil of human kindness has been drawn out in the process. You would not ask that woman for any favor unless it might be to borrow vinegar.

Charles says that whenever he comes in and finds me with my hair done on top of my head he goes straightway and puts on his second-best coat, getting into his dignity along with the garment, striving also to remember his p's and q's and to call to mind all his sins, both of commission and omission of recent date, because he knows that for the remainder of *that* day he is going to stand around as meek as Mary's little lamb. He says, he's always glad when the transformation takes place late in the afternoon, because then he knows he has not long to endure the agony, for as soon as I have slept, to use his words, "Richard will be himself again." (It is utterly impossible for me to be dignified and live with Charles.) But to return to Mrs. Powers: she

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had a scarf over her head, and when she took it off, her hair was all rippling about her ears and coming down in the back—such quantities of lovely chestnut brown hair with a silver thread now and then. She stood for several minutes, with her mouth full of hairpins, twisting her hair meantime, into a sort of double “figure eight” and putting in the pins while the women all talked.

As soon as she had the pins out of her mouth she began to answer: “O, dear, no, there isn’t a thing in the world the matter. I’m sorry you waited. It was just pure unadulterated laziness on my part. I lay down after dinner for my nap, depending on Catherine to waken me, and she forgot and let me sleep over time.”

I said I knew I should like her when I saw her hair. I knew it even better when I saw her face—just a common, everyday face as to features, a face that would have been decidedly plain had it not been beautiful, and would not have been beautiful but for the smile—not a policy smile, nor an affected smile—just a sort of joy-of-living smile that bubbles up and oozes out because there isn’t room for it inside. She went home before any of the others, because Henry, the oldest boy, is working in the printing office and must have his supper on time.

When I went home and told Charles about her

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I said, "Now you see a minister's wife may be efficient in public work and yet not neglect the home."

"Did I understand you to say that she is president?" he asked.

"O, dear, no, nor secretary, nor treasurer, nor any of those things."

"Well, then, what did she do to make herself seem different from any other woman there?" he inquired.

I thought a moment before I answered: "She didn't really *do* anything; she just seemed to *know* things. She told Mrs. Smith that the bootees were large enough for any ordinary infant, under six months, but advised making the others larger; she thought that particular style of quilt would look better set together in squares; she told us how to wash flannels without shrinking them, and she knows how to make a delicious cake with one egg (dear knows I'd think she'd *have* to); she gave us the recipe—we all wrote it down. I'll tell you," I continued, "she just *is*. I think she's really a sort of Mother Superior."

"I suspect that's it," Charles replied with one of his gravest smiles. "Perhaps, when you are as old as she you may be a Mother Superior too; in the meantime you can be a 'Sister Superior.'"

MARCH 15. I have been having *such* a time trying to make fires with green wood that I've

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been as "cross as two sticks"—green, wet sticks at that. The nearest Charles and I ever do come to disagreeing is about wood. I've begged him to buy the wood ready cut into stove lengths, but he says he needs the exercise of cutting it, and then he gets it brought in from the circuit on salary by taking it in the log. If some of the good brethren knew what a time I have getting it cut into stove wood, I'm sure they'd have pity on me and bring me a load ready cut.

Not that Charles is indolent or careless or anything of that sort, most certainly not. He's dug all the stumps out of the parsonage yard and a number out of the street, where the sidewalk is going to be, and he is always as busy as a bee, but the trouble is when wood-cutting time comes there's always something more important on hand, so he cuts enough for the present emergency and never gets any ahead to dry out. If I only could get the consent of my mind to do the way mother did when she broke Will and Tom of that same offense—just put the victuals on the table raw—I might accomplish the same results, but it seems I can't. Sometimes when I get real out of patience I think I will, but when it comes to the pinch I go to the foot of the stairs and call, very softly, because I hate to disturb him, "Charles, Charles, dear, I'll have to have some wood before I can finish dinner."

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Usually he jumps right up and goes and gets it without saying a word, but this morning he said: "That's always my luck: sometimes I go around here for a week and can't sight an idea within shooting distance; then when I just get well settled on a train of thought, with ideas fairly falling over each other, the pesky wood gives out. I wish we lived in the city and had gas."

"Don't you think," I suggested, "that if on some of those times when you can't catch an idea you'd get busy and cut up a quantity of wood, it would be a good deal more effective than wishing for gas?"

He never said a word, but made for the woodshed, where he cut and sawed until my heart smote me; but I just let it smite, for I knew I'd need the wood. I'm glad we don't burn wood in the living-room stove, and I'm sorry we bought a wood stove for the kitchen, because I know that, although Charles insists that the wood-chopping is good for him, he really detests it, as he does putting up window shades and stovepipes.

Speaking of stovepipes—we had a catastrophe one morning last week. I had a dreadful headache, so Charles insisted that I lie still and let Cynthia get the breakfast when she came; but as he was going out in the country and wanted to get an early start, he decided to make the fire and

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put on the oatmeal and coffee before Cynthia came. I was just dozing off, my head feeling somewhat better, when I heard the most terrible commotion below stairs and was getting into my clothes when Charles came to the foot of the stairs and called: "Don't come down, you can't do any good. There's nothing serious the matter—the stovepipe's fallen down."

The kitchen isn't well planned. In order to have the pipe go in at the dining-room flue, and at the same time have the stove where it is out of a draft and can get proper light, the pipe must needs go across the entire room. I begged Charles to have the pipe riveted, but he said, "O that's not necessary; I'll just wire it up in a couple of places." So now, when he came up all sooty and hot and cross, although I knew I was not assuming the proper Christian attitude, I felt it to be the psychological moment and could not forbear saying, "My dear, 'a stitch in time saves nine.'"

"In this case it would have saved *nineteen*—I counted the pesky things," he answered as he plunged his face in the washbowl. That afternoon a man from the tin shop came up and riveted the pipe.

MARCH 20. I've been baking an immense cake for Herbert Mason to present to the Literary Society. They are going to have a public pro-

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gram and a spread and all sorts of devices to induce the people to part with their nickels and dimes, in order to get money to fix up a hall in which to hold their meetings. The Society is becoming too large to be entertained in private homes. Herbert has recently come here from Ohio—came for his health. The doctors told him to get at something that kept him out of doors every minute, so he bought a horse and wagon, invested also in a rubber coat, boots, and hat, and announced himself as ready to do the public draying of Pleasant Center. He appears to be an exceptionally nice boy: he's-young, just out of high school, and, being away from home and in delicate health, everybody warmed to him and invited him to their homes; he's been here so much that he seems almost as though he "belonged."

When we were talking about the Society affair he said: "I wish I had some one to bake me a big, fine cake. I'd show you how to make a lot of money and have some fun besides. You've heard of giving a cake to the prettiest girl—the one who gets the most votes, you know; but that isn't in it with running the *ugliest man*. But the cake must be a fine one, something all the ladies would like to have, because then they'll all put up their husbands and buy votes, and, *gentlemen*, you'll see some fun," he concluded.

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I told him that, if he thought I could do it well enough, I'd bake him one.

"Would you, would you honest, one of those coconut cakes like you had last Sunday, only bigger? I'll buy all the 'fixin's' to do it with and cut the wood in the bargain." (He's been here enough to know that wood is my sore point.) "Let's make it big—a regular whopper. What could you bake it in?" he concluded.

We went and tried a lard can in the oven and found it would just go in and let the door shut, so we decided to bake a layer cake in lard can lids. It really looks fine—a regular little white mountain. Herbert is wild with enthusiasm—says that when the ladies see it every man in town will be put up.

MARCH 23. We entertained the young people last evening. Charles got the cake. Herbert came running up early in the evening to ask if I cared if he put up Mr. Sherwood's name—said all the doctors, lawyers, and ministers were being run. Of course I didn't care, although I didn't know what in the world I could do with the cake in case he was so unfortunate as to get it. But when he came triumphantly carrying it, followed by a delegation of young ladies who flourished their handkerchiefs and announced that they had come to sympathize and weep with me, I said, "Well, if you really mean it, you will all come

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to-morrow evening, bringing your sweethearts, your brothers, and your cousins, and help us dispose of this monument to shame."

So they came, and we had a very delightful evening with charades and pantomimes, which I resurrected from the memory of college days, and which were new to them.

Charles enjoys the work here so much. There are new people moving in almost every week; he is always interested in helping them get settled, asking them to church, and welcoming them when they do come.

APRIL 10. Charles has been to Patricia to perform a marriage ceremony. He was gone three days. Mrs. Mansfield came over as soon as she heard he was going and insisted on my staying with them. I would rather have stayed at home, but Charles felt so much better to have me go over there that I went to please him.

He had a nice visit in Patricia, met most of his old friends, but made headquarters at the Peace home. He brought me ten dollars to put in my savings bank. I get all the wedding fees and extra money to save for things I need in the house or for my personal use.

Charles says Patricia seems awfully slow as compared with Pleasant Center. He went around to call on the Stones. I don't remember ever to have spoken of the Stones. They do not

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belong to our church, but they frequently attended it, as their own church (Congregationalist) is not represented there. Young Mr. Stone is a teacher in the public school. They came to Patricia from Vermont in an effort to improve the young man's health. There are but the two of them, mother and son. They came to our church one Sunday, and Charles, seeing they were strangers, made especial effort to be nice to them, introducing them to a number of people.

I went with him to call on them soon after this, and the sweet-faced old gentlewoman seemed so glad to have me. She told me I was the only woman of her own class who had crossed her threshold since she had been there. I tried to interest some of our ladies in her, and several of them promised to go and call, but none of them ever did. I used to take my sewing and spend the afternoon with her quite frequently. She was so much help to me in many ways: her beautiful faith will always be an inspiration to me. She had lost a dear young daughter only a year before coming to Patricia. She often told me that I reminded her of Nellie, the daughter, in many ways.

When we went to tell her good-by she kissed me and, pressing my hand very tenderly, said: "My dear, no one in Patricia will miss you as I

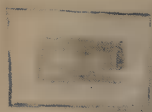
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shall miss you, but I am thankful to have had you this little while."

I am going to write the minister's wife who is there now, and ask her to go and call on Mrs. Stone. Charles says it will be real missionary work.

VII

JUNE 15. The greatest event in our lives has occurred. On the first day of May a little daughter came to live with us. It seems to me we have grown years and years in these six weeks since we've had her with us. Now all our plans for the future seem to center around Mary—that's what we call her. "Mary Elizabeth" is what we have christened her, for our mothers. I was so sorry mother couldn't be here, I felt that I needed her so much. But Emily needed her more; she was very ill of pneumonia in Boston. They sent for mother the last day of March. Emily has naturally delicate lungs, so as soon as she was able to travel the doctors advised mother to take her to Colorado for a year or two. Tom is out there, and they have gone to be with him for a time. It seemed too bad we could not see each other before they left, but our climate is too damp in the spring to make it safe for Emily to come; then, too, they could get a sleeper direct through from Boston, which made it so much easier for her. It was only the sight of mother and her companionship that I needed; I knew I had her love; and I had everything here that the most exacting could want. I have such



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On the first day of May a little daughter came to live with us.

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dear, good friends, but I *did* have the most autocratic old colored aunty for a nurse. The way she twisted this household around her finger was amusing. She undertook to institute some reforms which were not altogether satisfactory. Perhaps the one that caused the greatest dissatisfaction was changing the breakfast hour. Aunt Patsy's "white folks" had been professional and society people who kept late hours. Nine o'clock was their breakfast hour, hence nine o'clock was "quality" hour for breakfast. All the people whom Aunt Patsy served must observe "quality" hours if she was to stay under their roof. As she is the best nurse in all this part of the country, she has her way.

Now, Charles is an early bird, and he also likes to catch the worm (that is to say, his breakfast) at an early hour. After he had suffered the agonies of hunger and headache for several mornings he took matters into his own hands. He told Cynthia that he would stand between her and all danger—would go down, in fact, and make the fire and start the breakfast if she would be there to finish it up and serve it at seven o'clock, as she had been in the habit of doing. Charles said it was as good as a show to see the look on Aunt Patsy's face as she sat on the back porch and smoked her pipe. As for me, I had a pretty hard time at first, for Aunt Patsy's white

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ladies had lived, at such times, on toddy and gruel. I couldn't take the toddy; it gave me a headache and made me sick, and I got so tired of gruel. One morning I wanted something to eat so badly that I just lay there and cried. Mrs. Mansfield came over and, finding me thus engaged, insisted upon being told what was the matter. When I had poured out my woes I ended with a fresh wail of "And I'm so hungry." She dried my eyes, brushed back my hair, shook up my pillows, and told me to have patience a very little longer while she instituted a reform on her own hook. In half an hour she came back with the most delicious breakfast! I never in all my life tasted anything so good and never expect to again. Aunt Patsy stood with her back to me while I ate. She said she wouldn't be "'sponsible" for murder. She tried to frighten me with all kinds of tales about ladies in "Virginny" who had eaten "jes sich doin's" and died before the doctor could get there. But I didn't frighten worth a cent; I knew Mrs. Mansfield would not bring me anything that would hurt me.

From that time on I fared sumptuously. Mrs. Mansfield brought me my breakfast, Mrs. Carter my dinner, and Mrs. Gray my supper. They did this every day until I was downstairs again; but never once did Aunt Patsy bring up the tray. She threatened every few days to go home, but

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did not go until the time she came to stay had expired.

SEPTEMBER 28. I have been having an experience of which I am going to write while it is fresh in my mind. Charles has been out at Oak Hill holding a protracted meeting. They insisted on having Brother Sturm, from a neighboring circuit, to assist in the meeting and do most of the preaching, in order that Charles might have time to visit over the community and interest the people in attending. Charles told me at the time that he knew they wanted Brother Sturm because he always succeeds in creating an excitement, which some people mistake for religion. These people all like Charles, but he doesn't preach enough "hellfire and brimstone" to suit most of the country people. I had never been out to any of the country appointments because all winter and spring the roads were so bad, and during the summer I was afraid to take the baby.

The roads are fine now, and I had said to Charles that I meant to go out some Sunday before Conference. He had been gone a week when, on the afternoon of the twenty-fifth of September, our wedding anniversary, he came dashing up in a fine buggy drawn by a sure-enough fiery steed, and announced that he had come "atter" us. He said a young traveling man who was "doing" the country had offered him

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the outfit to drive into town and bring us out; said the horse was perfectly safe if he kept the lines up. I felt a little nervous about taking the baby behind such a horse, and, anyway, I had never planned to spend the night away; I had only meant to drive out for the day, so I said as much, adding: "I would not know how in the world to go about putting the baby to bed away from home. Here I have Cynthia to light a fire on the hearth, warm the blankets, and help in so many ways." Then I thought about the milk. "I couldn't possibly go to stay so long"—he had said they wanted me to stay two or three days—"on account of changing the baby's milk," I concluded.

"O, I've looked after that all right. We are to stay with Sister Sharp. She has a cow who has a calf the same age as baby, and she says the milk's bound to agree with baby. However, if you think best, I'll run over and ask Dr. Gray." When he came back, saying that Dr. Gray said that if I boiled the milk, it would be all right for a day or two, I was sorry, for I really did not want to go; yet I was so hungry to talk with Charles awhile, and knew he would be so disappointed if I didn't go, that I hurriedly got ready and we were soon skimming along on our way to Sister Sharp's. During most of the drive Charles was so occupied in keeping the lines from

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getting under the horse's tail and otherwise guarding against accidents that he had very little time to talk except to answer an occasional question. In this time I did a lot of remembering. I remembered that Charles had told me that Sister Sharp was one of the "yes, but" kind of people. He always says that the people who used that phrase can spoil anybody's happiness or blight anyone's character without saying anything really culpable. I remembered also that I had heard him say that Sister Sharp always went to church, and that she lived alone, or with only a "bound boy," renting out her farm to "croppers," or hiring work by the day. Remembering all these things, I began to wonder who was going to stay with me, and I began to question Charles accordingly.

"Does Sister Sharp always go to church?" I began.

"She's always the first one there and the last one away."

"Does anyone stay at the house?"

"No one but the dog."

"How far is it to the nearest neighbor?"

"A little less than half a mile."

"Charles, who's going to stay with me?"

"Stay with you! Why you're *going*. That's what you're coming out for—to 'tend the meetin'."

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"But the baby—surely they do not expect me to take the baby to church *at night*."

"Sure. They all do (take 'em I mean). Wrap her up good and warm and she'll never know she's been out of her crib."

"Charles Sherwood, if I'd dreamed of such a situation, you'd never have brought me *one* step," I ejaculated.

You ought to have heard that man laugh! "Of course you wouldn't," he said. "I'm not such a silly as to have supposed you would, so I 'jest laid low and said nuthin' 'till you asked me. And, dear," he continued, "I wouldn't say anything about never having taken the baby to church, because out here they all take the babies from the time they are a month old, so they would think we were regular heathen and be taking up a collection to send us a missionary, or at least to have Brother Sturm come in and hold a meeting for your benefit, and you wouldn't like that."

I had very little time in which to decide what course I would pursue, for we arrived soon after this, and I then found that I might as well have left my mind at home, only bringing my bodily presence, for Sister Sharp is the kind of woman who imagines that she has a contract to help run the universe, and "acts well the part." She lays out the fields of action and sweeps you along

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"willy-nilly." She hurried everybody to eat supper so that she could get the dishes done and have an early start.

I dried the dishes while she washed them and gave directions to Bob. "Now, you Bob, don't be till day after to-morrow milking that cow," was her parting injunction. When he came in with the milk she motioned him to the kitchen sink. "Hurry up now and get washed and your hair brushed," she ordered, "and see if there's any barnyard sticking to your shoes. No difference about changing your clothes—nobody'll notice 'em at night."

"I'd been a thinkin', Mis' Sharp," ventured Bob, "that if you don't mind, I'll stay home to-night an' git some sleep. 'Pears to me like I'll fall asleep on my feet if I don't. I know I won't git no sense out of what the man says."

"Stay home!" exclaimed Sister Sharp. "Well, I guess not—not while I'm responsible for you, and my house is your home. Don't you know that folks that *can* go to church and *don't* go can't ever expect to go to heaven? Stay home to git some sleep—did I ever! How much sleep do you suppose you need? You've been goin' to bed at 'leven o'clock and gettin' up at five—five and 'leven is sixteen—how many hours was you thinkin' of takin'? Hurry up now, go harness up to the big wagon."

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As the boy went out the door she nodded toward him, saying: "The poor thing is half silly; sometimes I think he's *all* the way. Did you notice he never seemed to catch on to what I said about how many hours he slept, and him been goin' to school every winter sence I've had 'im—four terms hand runnin'? I misdoubt if he's got any mind worth cultivatin', but, of course, I have to do *my* duty."

I wondered to myself what possible use a mind would be to the child if he had one; more than likely it would rust out with disuse. But I soon had troubles of my own and had no time in which to worry over Bob's.

I had washed the baby's bottles, putting the nipples to soak in a glass of soda water on the kitchen table. When Sister Sharp strained the milk she reached for one of the bottles, with the words, "I'll fill 'em up while the milk is nice and warm."

I put my hand over the bottle saying quickly, "O, no, Sister Sharp, the milk will have to be boiled."

"Boiled nuthin'," she ejaculated. "*My* cows' milk don't have to be boiled. It's good, clean milk, from a good, healthy cow, and none of your town rot." So saying she reached over, took the bottle, and filled it before you could say Jack Robinson.

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"Here, now, take that and give it to 'er, and I'll be bound she'll think it's the best meal she's ever had."

I took the bottle, and going in where Charles was walking the floor with the baby in an effort to keep her quiet, related what had occurred, and asked, "What *am* I to do?"

He thought a moment—then answered: "I'm sure I don't know. She's probably let the fire go out. It's getting late, almost time to go. Perhaps the raw milk will not make the baby sick, just this *one* time."

"But," I expostulated, "it will *have* to be diluted, and I'd rather face a cannon than to ask her for warm water."

"I'll go and ask for a little warm water to wash the baby," he volunteered.

"Yes," I returned, "and she'll give it to you out of the reservoir, and put it in the washpan. It will have to be *boiled* water, out of the *tea-kettle*, and brought in a *clean* cup."

"All right; I'll bring it. I'll ask for a cup of hot water to make a gargle for my throat."

"Good, now hurry, there's a dear, for baby's getting hungry, and I don't want her to cry."

When he came back I slipped out the side door and emptied a part of the contents of each bottle under a rosebush, then added the water. I wondered what I was going to do with the night feed-

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ing, for I just that moment remembered that we had forgotten to bring the alcohol stove. Charles, however, was born to meet emergencies. In this case he met it by wrapping the bottle in a newspaper and putting it under the pillow.

I was afraid baby would take cold out in the night air with only her coat, so Charles asked Sister Sharp for an extra wrap. She gave us a blanket shawl. So many details took up time, consequently we were rather late getting there, and the house was nearly full at the time of our arrival. I think I never saw so many babies in one crowd, except at a baby show. When I saw the women tossing their babies up and down, holding them over their shoulders, or laying them, stomach down, across their knees with their poor little heads hanging down, in fact, resorting to all sorts of devices to keep them quiet, I wondered what I *should* do if mine began to fret, because she would not be hungry, consequently I could not rely upon the unfailing panacea—her bottle; and, furthermore, I was in extreme suspense from expecting every moment that she would take the colic because of what she had already eaten. But she didn't; she lay there playing with her little hands and looking at the light, until after awhile my nerves began to relax, and I began to hope that if the Lord tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, he might perhaps temper

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the milk to the poor babe whose mother was supposed to be doing his service.

I didn't get up when they sang, nor kneel when they prayed. I just sat there and held my baby tight in my arms. By and by she drifted off to sleep. Unconsciously, I breathed a sigh of relief. I did not know it had been audible until the woman in front of me, who was rocking her baby back and forth across her knee, turned to look at me and smiled. I liked her smile; it had a sympathizing, motherly look—such as one mother gives another, and no one else can give or understand.

I did not, as Sister Sharon would say, "sense" much of what the preacher was saying, I was too much occupied with watching my baby, and the other mothers and their babies; but presently I became conscious that everybody was preparing for something, and pretty soon they began to sing, during which time Brother Sturm kept calling for penitents. Only two or three went up, however, so he called upon all the members to go out into the audience and bring their unconverted friends to the altar.

I had no friends in the audience, and I had my baby to care for, so I sat still with a clear conscience while I saw first one and then another of the women, carrying their sleeping babies (they were nearly all asleep by this time), go up

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to the platform and lay them on the floor. At last the mother in front of me went and carried hers up, then coming back to me she held out her hand, saying: "Sister Sherwood, I'm pleased to know you. There's a nice place out of the draft right next my baby. If you'd like to lay yours down, I'll go up with you. I'd take the shawl to throw over her." So saying, she picked up the shawl and started up the aisle, so there seemed nothing for me to do but follow.

When I had deposited baby I wondered what I was expected to do next, but I had not long to wait. Brother Sturm shook hands with me, then, giving a comprehensive sweep of the arm out over the audience, he commanded, "Go out, Sister Sherwood, and bring a lost soul to the altar."

"But, Brother Sturm," I stammered, "I don't know any of these people; they are all strangers to me."

"That don't make a bit of difference; there'll be just as bright stars in your crown for bringing a stranger to God as for bringing a friend."

Just then I felt that I'd be very well satisfied to have the crown without any stars. I looked for Charles, hoping he would help me out, but he pretended not to see me. He had left me to sink or swim, survive or perish; but at that moment I had an inspiration—I

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looked out in the audience and saw Bob. Straightway, I remembered what Sister Sharp had said about his mental lack, and was comforted, for I thought, "He probably will not know if I fail to say just the proper thing, but no doubt his soul is as valuable as any, so I'll go and talk with him."

I soon found however, that Sister Sharp is mistaken in her diagnosis. Bob has plenty of mind, but it is occupied with such weighty matters that the ordinary observer fails to sound its depths.

He was sitting alone in the back of the house. I sat down beside him and, after a few moments conversation, asked if he would not like to go up to the altar for prayers.

"No'm, I can't rightly say as I would," he responded. "It gits me all addled-like to hear so much singin' an' prayin', an' 'pears like I can't think rightly. I'd ruther jest set here an' think. Seems like the idy they have of God ain't like the one mother used to have, an' it gits me all mixed up. Seems like the way they preach God is away off some'rs, an' he's all the time mad at us. But mother had a different idy; she talked like God was her friend an' was here all the time. I was only a little boy—I wasn't but six when she died—but I remember when we used to go out to walk, sometimes I'd hear the leaves a rustlin' on

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the trees, an' I'd ask, 'What's that mother?' an' she'd say, 'God speakin' through the leaves.' Then she told me that God is everywhere—in the grass, an' the flowers, an' the trees, an' that he loves us, an' that we are his children, an' that he speaks to us through all these things, but most of all through the still small voice in here," and he laid his hand on his heart. "But after she died," he went on, "an' I went out West to live with Cousin Ann I never heard no more about God. There wasn't any trees to speak of, but once when I was out in a big field of corn I heard the wind makin' that same kind of noise, an' I thought mebby that's God a speakin', an' I thought I'll ask Cousin Ann; but when I asked her she was awful mad, an' said that was blaspheming, an' that if I ever done it again she'd whip me. She said God lived away off in heaven, where good folks go when they die. When Cousin Ann died Mis' Sharp was out there visitin', an' she said she'd take me an' do for me till I was grown, an' she's done it. She's good, Mis' Sharp is, but she's got the same idy about God that Cousin Ann had, but, someway, they don't satisfy me. Soon 's I seen you I said to myself, 'She'll know which idy is right, an' if I git a chance, I'm goin' to ask her.' I'm powerful glad you give me the chance."

He looked up at me with such appeal and such

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confidence that I sent up a prayer for wisdom to enable me to say the right thing. When I had talked with him for some time I said: "Mr. Sherwood can explain all these things to you so much better than I, and I shall tell him about you and ask him to do it. In the meantime remember that God is your loving Father, everywhere present."

The altar exercises had closed and Brother Sturm was dismissing the congregation when I started up the aisle to get my baby. Sister Sharp met me and began introducing me to the different ladies whom we met. Being thus delayed, I found, when I reached the platform, that all the babies were gone—mine among the rest. However, in the next moment I saw Charles coming toward me carrying a bundle wrapped in a blanket shawl and knew that no one had kidnapped her.

We soon climbed into the wagon to be jolted back to Sister Sharp's and fall into her big feather bed, where I would be frightened about out of my senses for fear we would smother the baby.

Next morning promptly at six the bell rang for breakfast. I thought I never could get ready. My back ached, my head ached, I ached all over, and was sore in every muscle from jolting in that wagon. Baby was showing signs of being

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upset in her stomach, and, altogether, I felt pretty blue, and did not see how in the world I was to endure three days and nights of it.

Back in Hopewell, when I was a child, there was once a Methodist circuit rider who had a wife and five little children. He had also an old gray horse—a good mate for Lightning—and a rickety old buggy. Every once in awhile we would see the whole family pile into the buggy and start out for a “round on the circuit,” which meant an absence of four weeks from home. Rumor said they went because there was nothing in the house to eat. Be that as it may, as I now see it, that woman’s name ought to be in the Book of Martyrs.

Don’t tell me there is not a special Providence—I know better. We were just sitting down to breakfast when Dr. Gray’s colored man came riding up to tell us that Dr. Gray was very sick and wanted Charles to come at once. Of course I was awfully sorry Dr. Gray was sick, and hoped he wouldn’t die (and he didn’t), but if he *had* to be sick, I was glad it was *that* day and *not* the next week.

The children of Israel never welcomed deliverance more gladly than I. When I got home I felt as though I did not want to do a thing for a week but sit and rock the baby and sing hymns of thanksgiving.

VIII

SEPTEMBER 25, 1889. Two years since I have opened this book. Not because I have lost interest in what goes on in our world, but because I have been so busy living the life that I have had little time in which to write about it. I have been keeping another diary, a book of the sayings and doings of our little daughters. But as I sat down to look this book over to-day I felt that some day the contents of this one will be equally interesting to them and I must not let the links get broken past the power of memory to repair.

Our second little daughter, Jeanette, came to us when Mary was sixteen months old.

This fall we must leave Pleasant Center because the time limit has expired. We have been very busy and very happy here.

Charles has gained greatly in health and, although the last two years have been quite taxing, he has found time to get on splendidly with his studies. As soon as he was out of college he began studying for his A. M. degree. Sometimes these studies have had to be neglected for considerable periods at a time, but last June he took his degree.

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Then, too, his Conference studies have had to be completed. He has finished them now and will be ordained elder at the coming session of Conference. He has changed his manner of preaching too, very much for the better I think, and preparing his sermons is not nearly the tax that it used to be. His eyes are not very strong, so I do all his general reading aloud, a custom we instituted when we were first married and still continue, although all our friends said we would have to give it up when the babies came. I find that it rests me and takes my mind off the petty things of every day, besides giving me the consciousness that I am keeping up with my husband in things intellectual. We have added Emerson's Essays, Drummond's Natural Law in the Spiritual World, a volume of Phillips Brooks's addresses, and several volumes of Ruskin since we have been in Pleasant Center.

And what of Pleasant Center? As I sit here by the window I can see spots of new here and there, which indicate homes in the making, but as I look down the nearby streets, with their brick sidewalks, their street lamps, and their fine public buildings, I feel as though I have been set down in some old Eastern town. Our church has been enlarged until the "enlargement" is greater than the original.

Long ago—two years, in fact—it was detached

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from the circuit and made a station, paying a salary of five hundred dollars.

The parsonage has not been enlarged, but that has been my fault. I have felt that with my babies I preferred somewhat cramped quarters, rather than the necessary upheaval consequent upon the addition. If mother had been at Hope-well, I should have taken the children and gone home while the work was being done; however, we have been and still are quite comfortable.

For a year the town grew by leaps and bounds, very much like the "boom towns" of the West. People came from every whither. We had adventurers, and adventuresses, and some of them got into the churches, making no end of trouble. We had our share.

One man in particular cost us a pretty penny and a good bit of shame. One evening, just at supper time, a strange gentleman wearing a clerical coat and introducing himself as the Rev. Joseph Wade, of X—— Conference (a well-known Conference of New England), presented himself at the parsonage door. He was soon followed by a dray and a huge trunk, which he ordered deposited in the hall. "You see," he explained, "I always find it best to go right to the parsonage. The pastor usually needs money, and I would rather pay my money to him than to anyone else."

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Now, Charles is rather a "woolly lamb" in some respects, but enough is enough, so he said: "I thank you very much for your kindly interest, but ours is a case where time and strength are of more import than money. I could not think of imposing upon my wife any extra work. I will go with you to a hotel or a private boarding house, as you choose."

However, the good brother was not to be so easily disposed of. He laid aside his hat and gloves, seated himself in a rocker, began to rock gently back and forth, humming and rubbing his hands together, while his eyes roamed over the room. Presently, he came back to the point in question: "Work did I understand you to say? I shall cause no work. I am the easiest man in the world to please. Just simple fare, bread and milk if you like."

I went to the kitchen and called Charles. "You would better just let him stay until morning," I advised. "It is dark now and raining. Besides, his baggage is heavy and you would have it to carry."

Consequently, Brother Wade remained with us and sat down to our frugal meal, which he did not seem to enjoy overmuch. (I think he was disappointed that I took him at his word.) We disliked to give up our evening, as we had some new magazines and had been looking forward all

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day to enjoying them when the babies should have been put to bed.

As soon as we had returned to the living room our guest began to ask about the church, especially as to its spiritual welfare. "You preach entire sanctification, no doubt, Brother Sherwood?" No, he didn't preach entire sanctification.

"You have experienced the second blessing?"

"Yes." Charles had experienced the second and the hundredth; in fact, he was experiencing a new one every day, but not in the manner referred to, nor did he consider it a wise doctrine to teach.

The glove was thrown down—the argument was begun. I endured it until ten o'clock, then slipped out and went to bed. When Charles came up I asked him if he was going to invite the brother to occupy the pulpit on Sunday. "Not if the court knows itself," he answered.

Next morning Charles went down town early after breakfast and had a dray sent up for the trunk and baggage. I don't think I ever saw even an unregenerate person any angrier than that good sanctified brother. He preferred a hotel, wanted the best, so Charles piloted him there and introduced him.

We heard no more of Brother Wade for two weeks, when one day Charles was passing down

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the street and the clerk of the hotel called him and presented a bill for two weeks' board. Charles was dumfounded. What did it mean? Well, it meant that the Rev. Joseph Wade, whom Mr. Sherwood had brought in and introduced, had told them that he was here looking after interests connected with the Rev. Mr. Sherwood's church, and that all bills would be paid by the church through the Rev. Mr. Sherwood.

After this the chief druggist in town told him that the fellow had left an opium bill of several dollars unpaid, but as Charles had not introduced him to the druggist, he had nothing to do with that. But the board bill we paid and suffered numberless sacrifices on account of it.

The rapid influx of people created new conditions which must be met, consequently new institutions must be organized to meet them. Therefore our old improvement society disbanded and each church organized its ladies for more specific work. We of the old clan have missed the comradeship of those times more than we can tell.

Last week when Mrs. Mansfield was talking about having the church give some sort of a "farewell" for us I said: "O I do hope you won't. But there is one thing I would love to have you do—ask all that are here of the old Society to meet on your east porch one afternoon, have a regular session of the Society with Mrs. Powers

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presiding, let us each take some kind of work, and when the time comes go home just as we used to do without any 'eats,' any fuss and feathers, anything but just a 'feast of reason and a flow of soul.' " Yesterday afternoon we had it. We crossed our hearts and promised not to be sad, but to go away when the Society was over just as though we expected to meet again next week. Whenever in the years to come I shall turn over the pages of memory I am sure I shall recognize the record of this afternoon before the page is reached, even as one locates the rose-jar in a darkened room.

Emily and Eugene are to be married the first of October. Mother came back to Hopewell last month to get ready for the event. Charles is to perform the ceremony. Emily wanted me for matron of honor, but I persuaded her to have a *maid* instead, for I did not feel that I could afford the proper dress (though, of course, I didn't tell *her* so).

We are to start home to-morrow so as to be there to help with the final preparations. I have my black silk done over beautifully—one would never know it was not new. I am going to get a new hat to wear with it when we go to the city. I had my brown traveling dress done over also. I have had it trimmed in a different shade of brown, with a cape and a toque to match. I

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really think it is prettier than when it was new; but Charles is not pleased with it—he wanted to have me get something new. I told him that I would so much rather have the dress done over, as it is beautiful goods, than to have something new and cheap. I think it is that he dislikes to take me home without one *really new* dress. But dear me, I don't care; I'm so pleased to be going home, so proud of my babies, so anxious to see mother and Emily and the boys (they are both coming on for the wedding), that just so I am respectable I don't care much what I am to wear.

I am excited too over going to Conference to see Charles ordained. Mother is going to keep the babies and I am going on with him after the wedding. It's getting late—I must put this away. I shall put it in the trunk, for I shall want to write some while I am home.

HOPEWELL, OCTOBER 5. I enjoyed every single step of the journey home. I wasn't sick a minute, the babies were good, the weather was ideal, and I was looking forward to the end with only the most pleasurable anticipations. The nearer we came the more it seemed I could not wait to see mother. Of course I wanted to see the others too, but I wanted most of all to show mother my babies and have her take me in her arms. Emily was right there to meet us when we stepped from the train. As soon as she had

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kissed me she exclaimed, "If she hasn't had that old brown dress made over again!"

"Yes," answered Charles, "I told her how it would be; even the conductors on the trains know her by that dress. Coming up from the Junction I had to go into the smoker, the other car was crowded. I forgot to give Lucy her ticket, so when the conductor came through I said, 'This ticket is for my wife; she's sitting toward the front, has a brown suit—' but he interrupted me with, 'Yes, yes—I know her.' "

I scarcely heard what they were saying. I was starting toward the platform looking for mother, who was coming toward me with both hands extended. She gathered us, Baby Jeanette and me, into her arms, saying; "My darlings, my darlings, God bless you." I never realized before how much I love my mother nor what her love means to me.

The boys were not to come for a day or two. Will has been out on the Pacific Coast and was to meet Tom in Denver and come on with him. Charles went up to the city the next day to attend to some business for mother, so we women were alone for the day. We got out all of Emily's beautiful clothes and admired them and tried them on and talked. All the time we talked, no matter what we were doing.

Emily and mother both admired the hat I had

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purchased in the city and praised my taste and judgment, but it was not my selection although I was secretly delighted with it. The lady of "The Emporium of Fashion" looked us over and probably concluded that we had that much money with which she might induce us to part; then she gave my hair a twist and a turn and put the hat on my head, and Charles would not let me take it off, although I insisted that the price was more than we were able to pay. It is a large black beaver with a lovely plume and an immense bow of magenta ribbon. I think it was the red ribbon that captured Charles.

After dinner Emily insisted on doing my hair in order that she might see how the hat would really look on me. When we had tried it set back on my head, and brought forward over my face, and I had adjusted it, according to the authority of the "Emporium" lady, mother turned to Emily, saying: "You might bring down my little present now, dear. I'm anxious to see how it will suit her."

Emily ran up to mother's room and soon came down carrying one of those huge pasteboard things—the delight of every woman's heart—and began to open it. I held my breath in anticipation, and then—I squealed with delight; I hugged mother and squealed some more. Emily lifted out the gown—a lovely silk in robin's-egg blue.

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There was a lovely hat to match, and even gloves and boots—the daintiest boots, patent leather with blue velvet tops. It took mother and Emily both to help me into the things, I was so excited. When I had paraded around, viewing myself in all the mirrors, and Aunt Jane had come up (dear old Aunt Jane! She still has the family tree, but she's going to give it to Emily for a wedding present) and had examined me and my new finery, and had commented on how much I had changed since I was married, by that time the hour had arrived for Charles to come home. I hid behind the parlor door and had Emily tell him there was a lady waiting to see him. At first he thought it was some of Emily's wedding finery I was trying on, and when he found it was my very own I don't think he liked it much at first; but after I had explained that mother felt that she wanted to do something for me, and on account of our not being settled it seemed useless to buy things for the home, so she had brought me these things from Denver, he appreciated the situation and enjoyed them as much as I did.

I wore the gown and was matron of honor at the wedding, and afterward had all sorts of nice things said to me about how well I was keeping my youth, *considering that I had married a minister and had two babies.*

Emily abhors a show, so does Eugene, conse-

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quently, they were married very quietly at home with only the relatives and a few near friends. Mrs. MacCarter and the girls were here, also Mr. and Mrs. Blair. I was so glad to see them all.

They all left immediately after the ceremony, and as we were standing at the gate watching them drive away Charles looked down at me and asked, "Would you like to exchange with her, little girl?" I reached for his hand before I answered, "Not with all the world added, if you and the babies were in the other side of the balance."

In a little while we went upstairs to pack such things as we would need to take with us and to put away my finery. As I folded the gown in its tissue-paper wrappings, I said to Charles: "It's too bad they did not realize more what things a minister's wife has need of—because, you see, if mother had bought me a pearl-gray silk, there would have been occasions upon which I could have worn it, but this elegant affair I shall probably never wear again; but," I added, "I've enjoyed wearing it *this* time, and I'll save it for Mary." (Mary is a blonde, Jeanette is a brunette.)

Charles laughed as he said: "Listen to the renunciation! Just wait till you go to visit Emily and have all the ladies in Richmond green with

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envy. Besides, we may go to a city church some time, and the wife of a city pastor may need all sorts of fine clothes. Anyway, you will have it put away in your trunk as a sort of an appearance of wealth, like an old minister I used to know when I was a boy. He said he never could preach to advantage unless he had money in his pocket, and that if Saturday night found him without that desirable commodity, he always went to a friend and borrowed five dollars to carry in his pocket, and to be returned on Monday morning. He said it gave him confidence just to know the money was there. So you, after the same manner, can have the assurance that you have a stylish gown, even though you do not care to wear it."

Conference is to be held at Crescent City, by which name you may know that it is not a city at all, but instead a large town assuming metropolitan airs. I am rather anxious to see the place, for Dr. Westcoat is presiding elder of that district now and has intimated to Charles that he would like to have us go to Crescent City.

IX

HOPEWELL, OCTOBER 15. How glad I am to see my babies again! They are looking fine. Mother says they have been as good as gold.

Charles has gone to bring our belongings from Pleasant Center. We shall have to sell some of our goods and will give others to the parsonage there, as we shall not need them at Crescent City, that parsonage being furnished. However, we have some things with which we feel we cannot part, and I have written down quite a list of them for Charles to bring.

But I must tell about the Conference. Some of it was like I thought it would be, but most of it was very different. We had a nice, comfortable place to stay. The lady is a great church and Woman's Christian Temperance Union worker, and holds a state office in the latter work. She left the day we came home for the national convention. She has a husband and two sons, the oldest boy being nineteen. She told me, with tears in her eyes, that he had not been inside of his home for more than a year. He and his father had some sort of a disagreement about religious matters—the boy wouldn't go to

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church. She pointed him out to me once on the street. He is a fine, manly-looking lad, and a clerk in one of the banks. My heart ached for her, but most for the boy.

There is another boy, just a laddie, only twelve. He had an accident on the playground and is laid up with a broken ankle and not able to move from his chair without assistance. They keep no servant, and the father is at his office, so while the mother is away the boy sits there alone. His father draws him to the window, puts a little table with his books and games and a glass of water before him, and leaves him so. I felt so sorry for the child and would have stayed away from some of the meetings to keep him company, but I felt it would be impertinent to suggest it.

But I'm not telling about the Conference. I fell in love with the bishop at sight. He was not at all like I thought he would be. He is just a plain, gray-haired, sweet-faced, gentle-voiced old man, who seems to love everybody. Charles says that if he dies, he has no fears that I will marry a young man, but he feels perfectly sure I will succumb to the charms of some fatherly saint old enough to be my grandfather. He is always teasing me about Brother Peace. (By the way, Brother Peace was at the Conference, a lay delegate from Patricia. I was *so* glad to see him.)

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Charles always said the reason I doted on Brother Peace was because at every church affair, when I wasn't well enough to attend, he would go around from table to table with a pasteboard box under his arm soliciting a piece of the best cake for "Sister Sherwood." Just the same, Charles was always glad to have him do it, for he generally brought a generous supply which lasted several days, and he (Charles) has a most awful "sweet tooth."

The one thing I enjoyed more than anything else about the Conference was the bishop's talks. He talked to the preachers and to the preachers' wives, there being quite a number of the latter present—more than usual, they said. There was one bride. I was glad I hadn't gone when I was a bride. Everybody looked at her; looked at her clothes, compared her with her husband, wondered this, that, and the other about her. For my part I hoped she had a saving sense of humor, because, if she did not, she was in a bad fix.

One afternoon I was going to church alone. I nearly always went alone, because Charles usually had to go early to some kind of a committee meeting. I have never gone to church and sat in the pew with Charles since we have been married. If he doesn't preach, he has to sit up in what Mary calls the "puffment." Just as I stepped into the vestibule a lady came out of the

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audience room. She was a dear little woman in a gray poplin with a pink rose at her throat. She took me by the hand, saying: "I am sure this is Mrs. Sherwood. I am Mrs. Grant, of Patricia, and I want to thank you for bringing into my life one of its greatest joys in the friendship of Mother Stone."

As soon as she said "Mother Stone" I knew the rose came from one of her potplants and said as much.

"Yes," she replied, "and I have the exact mate for it over at my room for you. Mother Stone sent it with her love."

How different everything was from the way I had expected it to be! I had thought to feel alone and ill at ease, but instead I met friends at every turn. I had just one disagreeable experience.

We all know that eavesdroppers never hear any good of themselves, but in my case I could hardly have avoided hearing what I did without creating a scene. I was tired and thought I would not go out in the afternoon, but lie down and rest, thus being fresh for the evening service. The day was rather chilly, and my room having no heat, Mrs. Croft suggested that I lie on the couch in an alcove off the reception room. The shades were down and there was a heavy curtain between the alcove and the main room which she

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drew together, saying: "Now, you just lie here and rest; perhaps you can sleep, for everything will be quiet. I am going out for an hour or two. James is in the dining room [they kept him there in the daytime because it made it handier for his mother to look after his needs], and he will probably take a nap too; he usually does in the afternoon."

She had not been gone more than a half hour when I heard some one come in. I knew there were two or more of them, for they were talking as they went down the hall toward the dining room. Presently they came back, entered the reception room, and closed the door behind them.

"I hope we did not wake the child—poor thing! The day is long *enough* when he can sleep part of it away. Where *can* Mrs. Croft be? I'm certain this is the hour she told me to come. I positively will not walk over here again with this report—it's a *mile* if it's a step. I don't see what anyone who wants to hold *all* the offices in the church wants to live in such an unearthly place for, anyway. There's *one* thing certain and *two* things sure—I'm not going to be on any of her old committees *next* year."

"Maybe the next minister's wife will want to hold some of the offices herself. By the way, have you heard anything about who's likely to be our pastor?"

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"Say, don't breathe it—I've been let into it as a dead secret. They think we're likely to get that young Sherwood—my! but he's a dandy. I've set my cap for him."

"That's all the good it'll do you. He's married—got a wife and two children."

"Bah! I don't believe it—he's nothing but a boy."

"All the same, he's married, and his wife's here. Did you notice that rather stylish-looking young woman who sat up toward the front the night he preached—the one with the big red bow on her hat? That's her."

"I don't think *she's* stylish-looking. The hat is rather fetching; but did you notice how she wears her hair?—just like she did when she was married, bet you five cents—and every other woman in the house with her hair in a psyche, even to old Ann."

At this they both laughed, and I judged that "Old Ann" was probably a sort of Sister Sharon, or Mrs. Mollie Winter. It seems that all the churches have in them one or two such individuals.

"Anyway, she'd be a big improvement on Mrs. Smith. I hope we do get the Sherwoods—I liked his sermon, didn't you?"

"O yes, well enough; but I'm not interested since I've found he's married. I'm going to look

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around and see if there isn't a *single* man available and suggest him to Dr. Westcoat."

"Pshaw, Em! Don't be so easily discouraged. Maybe his wife'll die soon; she looks delicate."

"Don't fool yourself, that kind never die, they just dry up and blow away, or wait to be shot at the Judgment. Look at Sister Smith." (The way she said "Sister Smith" made me fairly boil with rage.) "Just take her, for an example: she's been dying ever since they came here three years ago, but she's a mighty lively corpse when it comes to nosing around where she has no business. I wish to goodness she'd stay home and look after those six young Arabs of hers instead of being always in evidence disgracing us with her outlandish dress and manner. Did you *ever* see anything as dowdy as that last hat of hers? And to think that she just deliberately chose it when she might have had a *decent* one is enough to provoke a saint. You heard about the tilt the Ladies' Aid had with her about it, didn't you? You see, mother's president of the thing, so I got onto the inside of the whole rigamarole. The Aid decided that it could never look itself in the face if it let her attend Conference wearing that old bird's nest she had last year, so they went and bought her a right nice, decent-looking hat—gave five dollars for it. They sent it to her with a nice little note saying they hoped she'd wear it

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and like it. Of course, next Sunday all the folks who were onto the matter were craning their necks watching for Mrs. Smith and the new hat, when in she comes wearing an even worse-looking contraption than the one she had before. Mother says she'll never do another thing toward helping to fix up another minister's wife, not if the ragman takes the last one of 'em."

"But," interposed the other young lady, "I heard there were extenuating circumstances. I heard she had just bought the hat to go down to Youngstown to her cousin's wedding, and that, having worn it once, the milliner refused to take it back, so she had to keep it."

"I don't see as that was any excuse," was the reply. "She might have kept the one the Aid gave her, anyway. It wouldn't have killed her to have had *two* hats. But no, she must needs take the only decent thing she ever had and exchange it for those blooming flower gardens you see those two oldest girls of hers arrayed in. They look exactly as though they might have come out of Grassy Cove to attend the circus, or would if they only had some chewing gum. I believe I'll buy a package and give it to them. Good land! I wish Mrs. Croft *would* come. Let's go back and see if James is awake—maybe he'll know where she's gone."

The moment I heard them enter the dining

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room I hurried to the stairs and fled to my room. I was angry, I was amused, I was disgusted. I looked at myself in the mirror—my eyes were flashing, my face was crimson. I bathed my face and brushed my hair, but it seemed I could neither cool nor smooth my ruffled feelings.

"Is *that* the way they talk about us when our backs are turned?" I ejaculated. "Is that the sympathy a poor, overworked, unselfish mother gets from the prosperous members of her husband's fold? Well, one thing was certain, I must not tell Charles. Every day made it a little more certain that we were to be appointed to Crescent City, and what I knew I *knew*, but he must not know, at least not now.

I was told that there were upward of forty marriageable young ladies in the congregation, not to mention widows and grass widows, and I made up my mind that as far as their designs upon Charles were concerned, they might all go hang their harps upon a willow tree. I decided also that I would keep decent clothes if we dined on bread and supped on water; and, furthermore, no one of them should ever hear me complain, not if I died with my boots on.

Next morning the bishop talked to the preachers' wives. He pulled all these roots of bitterness up and shook the dirt from off them. Among other things, he told us that in so far as

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their usefulness and efficiency were concerned, we held the destinies of our husbands within our own hands. He said that some people thought that ministers' wives, like poets, were born, not made, but that this was a mistake; that, having been born into the "sisterhood," his father being a minister, and also that having had a wife of his own for nearly half a century, he gave it to us as an axiom, that ministers' wives are made by combining the wisdom of the serpent, with the harmlessness of the dove, by exemplifying all the graces in the catalogue and some that are not in it, and by manifesting a patience and endurance that is sublime. After this he gave us a great deal of good, fatherly advice, which I am sure every one of us appreciated and decided to profit by.

I looked across at Mrs. Smith, wearing the odious hat—her face wore such a beatific smile that I should never have noticed the hat had it not been for the comments of "Em." From Mrs. Smith I cast my eyes to where the wife of the pastor from Grassy Cove was sitting—she with the immense fichu of cotton lace, the shabby hat with the stiff green plume that stood straight up, and the four unkempt children tugging at her skirts or climbing over her knees. As I looked, the tired droop seemed slipping away from the corners of her mouth, and on her face was an

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uplifted look beautiful to see. So often I had looked at her and wondered what in the world *she* came for, what the Conference could possibly hold for *her*, but now she was coming into her own—she was being understood. After the services I went and spoke to her. I also introduced myself to Mrs. Smith, who insisted on taking me around to the parsonage for tea.

Monday morning the church was filled to hear the appointments read out. I suppose that by that time almost all the preachers had some idea as to where they were to be sent, nevertheless, it was an anxious, awesome time. We knew just as well before as we knew later that we were to be sent to Crescent City, and yet when "Crescent City—Charles Sherwood" fell from the bishop's lips I cried; I couldn't help it.

The Smiths wanted us to come over to the parsonage in the afternoon and look around. They also wanted the parsonage committee to come while Sister Smith and I should both be there and take their annual inventory. By the time that committee had finished counting the sheets, pillow slips, tablecloths, napkins, and towels, and noting how many sheets were worn in the middle, and how many napkins frayed at the hems, how many towels needed replacing with new ones, how many dishes were nicked or cracked, how many chairs were disabled, and

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how many carpets needed cleaning, I felt like a beggar. I made up my mind right then and there that they would find everything at the next inventory just as they found it now except for the necessary wear and tear on the heavy furniture and on the parlor carpet. I shall put away all the linen and china; we shall also use our own carpets for the living and dining rooms. Upstairs we are going to furnish one room entirely with our own things so that, although we live in a strange house below stairs, here we shall be at home. I suppose we are silly. One woman, the wife of the pastor of one of the largest city churches, told me she had been married ten years and had never moved anything but her trunks and the baby's crib and, of course, her husband's books. She ended with: "You're a silly little goose to go lugging around a lot of stuff. You'll learn better later; better take my advice now."

OCTOBER 20. Just got a telegram from Charles telling me to come day after to-morrow. He is called upon to perform a wedding ceremony and cannot come for me as he had intended. I suppose one of the "forty odd" is going to get off, but I'm afraid it isn't "Em."

NOVEMBER 10. This is the first moment I have had in which to write since I came. The parsonage committee had the house cleaned very nicely, our things came from Pleasant Center,

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and we've fixed up our den until it looks quite "homey."

I was dreading to grapple with the servant problem, for I knew that with two babies and more or less public duties it was going to be impossible to get along alone. I knew too that Charles would have very little time in which to help me, and I was looking back toward Pleasant Center with a sort of "longing-for-the-fleshpots-of-Egypt" feeling which it took a mighty conjuring up of the scene in the little blue house and Mammy Sue to dissipate. But there would be one advantage—Charles would be at the end of the journey to meet me, and we would have some definite place to go, which was something we had not had before.

We took a carriage up to the house, and as we went up the steps—Charles in front carrying Jeanette, I leading Mary—he turned, saying, "Mother, I brought everything for which you sent me and more—I've brought your chief jewel."

With this he opened the door, and there stood Cynthia. I was so excited I almost kissed her. It seemed I had never seen anything more beautiful than her ebony face. The children were wild with delight, clapping their hands, and even Baby Jeanette calling, "Sinty, Sinty," that being one of the few words she could say.

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The next week the church gave a reception for us which was quite a formal affair. Besides our own people they invited all the other ministers and their wives, also the teachers in the different schools, consequently, there was quite a crowd. The older people came during the afternoon, the younger ones in the evening. A committee served coffee and cake in the dining room, also refreshments in the reception hall. At first I was awfully tempted to get out my blue silk, and do my hair in the latest style, thereby astonishing "Em" and the "forty odd," but when I reflected I thought better of the impulse. I must stop talking about "Em" and the "forty odd." I know there are a great many really lovable young ladies among them, and I mean to cultivate them just as I should have done had I not overheard that silly conversation.

If I ever have any intimate friends here I think they will have to be among the young set. Some way, I don't seem to fit in with the matrons; but perhaps I'll get adjusted after a while. I can't exactly explain how it is, but they, somehow, act as though they thought that I was "little and young and green"—have a sort of patronizing air. For instance, there is Mrs. Croft. I just cannot like that woman. I was her guest almost a week, yet she treats me every time she sees me as though it were the first time we had met. But

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with Charles she is very different—she is so effusively and offensively familiar that you would think she had mothered him since infancy. It's Brother Sherwood this, and Brother Sherwood that, and every time she gets near enough she lays her hand on his shoulder or his arm and does all sorts of silly things. I'm not jealous—I hope I have more sense than to be jealous of a woman old enough to be his mother. It's not that, it's the principle of the matter. Dr. Westcoat said once in speaking of some unfortunate affair of which Charles had said that it seemed strange to him how a sensible man could have gotten himself so involved, that it was not in the least strange to him. He said the only thing that he considered strange was that there were as few scandals connected with ministers and their congregations as there are, when you consider that the great majority of women insist on clothing every minister with a halo and then straightway throw themselves at him in a seeming effort to dispossess him of it. When I see the older women do so many improper things I no longer wonder at the silly gabble of the girls. It seems to me the whole atmosphere needs changing. However, I do not purpose setting out to make any radical changes. I remember one time in Pleasant Center, when we had been talking about how beautifully harmonious everything

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seemed, I asked Charles, "Do you suppose this really is a serpentless Eden?" He looked quite serious as he answered: "I'm afraid not. I suspect the old fellow is hiding around somewhere, but I wouldn't go lifting up bushes and turning over stones hunting him." I shall let that advice serve me here, and also try to have charity in judging motives and actions that do not appear to be according to my standard.

X

MAY 15, 1893. In sorting over such things as are to be taken and such as are to be left, I came across my diary, and a glance shows me that it has been more than five years since I have written therein.

The time limit has been extended, so we are still at Crescent City and should probably remain until the limit expires but for the fact that Charles has not been well for the past year, and the doctors recommend our going West for a year or two, preferably to Colorado or New Mexico. Dr. Westcoat has a friend in the Colorado Conference who is quite influential and who has promised to do his best for us, but says we must be satisfied to take anything that is open, as they have so many applications every year from ministers who are seeking the change, either for themselves or some member of their family, that the doors are always crowded and they cannot promise much.

We are not going with the expectation of being able to do more than make a living, and shall be entirely satisfied with that if only Charles can regain his old-time vigor.

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The work here has been very taxing. The membership is large—between two and three hundred—so the visiting is a great task (even with the little red book to help). There being so many young people, the social demands are heavy, even the matter of weddings consuming much time and nervous energy.

Cynthia's mother died the first year after we came, making it necessary for her to go home and keep house for her father. Since that time I have never had any really satisfactory help. Thus one thing and another has conspired to aid in my having neglected to chronicle events important and otherwise. But the chief reason has been that in the autumn of our second year here my mother died. Always when I sat down to write I could see mother's face, and I wrote as though I were talking with her. After she was gone I could not bear to get out the book. For a long time after her going I was unhappy and rebellious. I made my husband and babies unhappy also. I did not wear black; I think if I had, I could never have endured those months.

Ever since I first went away to college I had written to mother on Sunday evening. Now, when that time came, I shut myself in my room and refused to be comforted. If Charles tried to lure me for a little walk, I thought him heartless and unfeeling. Once upon coming down from

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my room I took a magazine from the living-room table and opened it at random. "Injustice to the Living While Mourning the Dead" was what met my eye. I shut the book and put it back on the table. What did the writer know? What did *anyone* know? To be sure, the world was full of daughters losing mothers, but not like *mine*. Before this experience death had never seemed *real* to me, but now it was the only reality. I went about as in a dream from which nothing could rouse me.

One day in the spring Charles asked me at lunch if I felt that I could spare the time to go and see a new family who had recently come among us, members of our church. The wife was young and had a new baby.

I said that I would go if Mollie was going to be at leisure so that she could look after the children; and then I asked where the people lived and inquired as to the best route to take.

"They live away over on East Ninth Street," Charles replied. "It's a good long walk, but the day is so fine I think you will enjoy it. You go to the Episcopal church and turn to the right. It's only three blocks from there."

After Charles had gone I almost wished I had not promised to go, but feeling it to be a duty that I owed the young mother, I dressed and started. As I neared the vicinity of the church

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it seemed to me there was an awesome stillness in the air. It was probably half after three o'clock, an hour when people are often upon their front verandas, hence I gave no thought to the fact that almost every veranda held one or more occupants. But suddenly it came to me that I heard no one talking or laughing, saw no one lounging in hammocks or enjoying the porch swing.

Turning the corner, I came in sight of the church, and there, under the fresh, green trees, stood a little white hearse, and a long line of carriages. From within came the sound of the voice of the clergyman. At the gateway of the house I was passing, an old colored auntie was standing, and I paused to ask, "Whose child is dead?"

"Mis' Jedge Neal's—yes'm, the widow. You know the Jedge done died las' Christmas wid pneumonia. Yes'm, this was her onliest chil'. Yes'm, she died mighty sudden—her mammy had tuck 'er to the hospital fo' some so't o' op'ration, an' dey done give 'er somethin' what she ain't never come to from. Dey says as how Mis' Neal am mighty nigh crazy, 'lowin' dat she mou'n all de time fo' de Jedge an' ain't gib de chil' de proper 'tention."

I turned and came home. I have no recollection of a single incident on the way. I only remember that as I came to the front door, which

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was open, I saw Mollie coming through the hall with the upstairs lamps in her hands. Before I could say a word she cried out: "Mis' Sherwood, what ever *is* the matter? You're as white as a ghost."

For answer I asked, "Where are my babies?"

"They're up in your room playing paper dolls and as happy as larks," was the answer, "so I thought I'd slip down and do these lamps, seein' they needed it so bad."

"That's all right, Mollie. You may take them up—then have the rest of the afternoon for yourself. I'll look after the children," I said.

I laid aside my hat and bathed my face. The queer, dull feeling in my head was gone. I was able to think clearly, and as I did so I realized how sadly I had failed in doing the things my mother would have had me do. Did I still love her? Was the memory of her sweet, unselfish life one of my dearest possessions? Then let me cultivate the graces she had exemplified, rather than spend my time in selfish sorrow.

I put on the house gown that my children loved best, pinned a flower at my belt and another in my hair, and went in where they were playing. They jumped up and ran to me crying, "O, mamma, you look beautiful, perfectly beautiful!" I called them to come and sit with me in daddy's big chair, I in the middle and a girlie on either

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side. We told stories and sang songs until after awhile Mary asked, "Mamma, what makes you love us so much to-day?"

"Mother loves you just the same every day, dearies, but she has been blind and didn't know it."

"Will you ever get blind again?" they asked.

"No, dearies, never again, I hope—never."

I felt so strange, so light, so uplifted—and all the while I could see mother smiling at me. I could hardly wait until Charles came. I shall never forget the look on his face when he came up and found us. When the children had gone out to play and I had told him all, he did not say one word—just took me in his arms. It was the first time I ever saw him shed a tear.

An old established church, such as this, does not make such marked changes during one pastorate as a young and growing one, yet there have been changes here, most of all, I think, in a higher conception of what religion really means.

Brother Smith, it seems, was a sort of jolly good fellow who imagined that to keep the young people interested he must put himself on their level rather than draw them to his, consequently it was a common sight to see him going down street with a young lady on either arm, taking them home from prayer meeting, or choir practice, while his tired wife waited at home. Such

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things had tended to break down restraint and left the church in the condition I mentioned when we came.

Here, as elsewhere, we have found dear friends, with whom it is a sorrow to part. Dr. Westcoat has obtained a young man from the seminary to finish out the year, so we leave the first of June for Colorado, that Conference being held at that time.

PLAINSBORO, COLORADO, AUGUST 10. In hearing people speak of unpleasant experiences I have often heard them say, "O, well, it all goes in a lifetime." I will be glad when I reach the point where I can look at ours thus philosophically.

The trip from home was hard, and from middle Kansas on to the end of the journey very trying. All this country is suffering from a great drought, so of course we can have very little idea what it would be like under different conditions. The vast plains, which, they tell us, are usually covered with grass, are now dry and parched, almost as sandy as the great sandy plains themselves. Sagebrush seems to be about the only living green. Even such little patches as have irrigation are suffering this year because there was not the usual snowfall in the mountains during the winter, consequently the necessary amount of water did not come down in the spring flood; then, too, irrigation is only in its

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infancy in this section. The ditches are new and the system not perfected.

Plainsboro is only five years from the sod. Alfalfa is the one great crop. Orchards and vineyards have been set out, but many of them must die if they do not get relief soon. The people confidently expect this to eventually be a great agricultural country, but it certainly does not look like it now. Everything in the line of vegetables and fruits costs us many times what they did back home.

So far as the church and our reception by the people is concerned, we are having an even more discouraging time than in our early days at Patricia, for we have no Brother Peace to help us out, and cannot even guess as to what is the matter. As the presiding elder wrote us before we came out, it is a hard matter for a new man to get much consideration. However, most of the better churches are in the higher altitudes and the doctors told Charles not to go into a high altitude at first, as his heart isn't altogether strong. Our presiding elder told us he could have done better for us had it not been for that.

The little white wooden church and tiny four-room parsonage look very small to one just coming from the East. I told Charles we could put the little parsonage inside the big reception room at Crescent City and still have room to walk

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around. Yet, with all these disagreeable things with which to contend, I feel sure we should get along all right if only the people would give us a little sympathy. I am sure I cannot see where the trouble lies—Charles has never before failed to win his people to him almost immediately, and even *I* have tried to be unusually considerate—to avoid talking about “back East” and all the other things about which I have been warned.

The minister who was here before us seemed to have a great many friends. They were two weeks in vacating the parsonage. They had a horse and buggy, and much of the time he and his wife were out visiting friends in the country while we sat in the primitive, ill-kept hotel, almost sweltering with the heat, and waited. It was so hard to keep the children amused, for there was nothing outside they could do except to try and find the coolest place on the shady side of the house. After this experience we were glad enough to get into the tiny little house with its bare white walls, its rag carpets and ugly coal stove.

If only the people would let us be a part of their lives, I believe we would be content, but they persist in holding us aloof. The wife of the former pastor played the organ and led the singing; I cannot do that. This is one time that Cousin Caroline's advice, had I taken it, would

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have come in handy, as there seems to be no one in the congregation who plays. Charles leads the singing; that is to say, Charles *does* the singing, for the little handful of people who come sit there as though they might be mutes, and seem also to have a sort of "what-can't-be-cured-must-be-endured" air, which I know must be very trying to a speaker. After the sermon they go out immediately, never stopping to shake hands or to give us a chance to do so. It is true we have met most of them, but they show no disposition to be sociable. As a rule, the people here appear to be above the average in culture and intelligence, but that class does not attend church. They also "pass by on the other side" socially. It makes it very lonely for us. The few people who attend church are tired, overworked women and discouraged-looking men.

For the past three Sunday mornings there has been a fine-looking rather young man who comes in late, sits on the back seat, and joins heartily in all the hymns, but the moment the benediction is pronounced steps out the door and is gone. We have been quite curious as to who he is, so to-day Charles asked some one and was told that it is Mr. Wainwright, one of our members, in fact, our principal member. His wife and children are visiting in the East, but are expected home next week.

XI

SEPTEMBER 5. Charles tells a tale of an old gentleman, whom he knew in his boyhood, who always threw an air of mystery around every possible event. One time, chancing to find some kerosene in an unusual place, he immediately drew the conclusion that some one was going to set fire to his premises. Accordingly, he went to all his friends and neighbors, warning them and advising them to look in unusual places and see if there was any "lamp ile" hidden. The next day, having found that his boys had started to carry the bottle of oil to where they were going to start a bonfire, but had been called to some duty and had dropped the bottle in the most convenient place and forgotten it, he started out to set matters right with his neighbors. Everywhere he went he announced, "Well, friends, the mystification of the 'lamp ile' has been cleared up." So I am glad to announce that the "mystification" surrounding Plainsboro church has been cleared up, but before the clearing there was a mighty mist.

Affairs were not getting any better. We were

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terribly homesick, but it was for the children we felt most keenly. The poor little things talked "home" even in their sleep.

In Colorado the one desideratum seems to be to "strike it rich," then go to live in Denver. The phrase, of course, originated in the mining camps, but it seems to apply to all lines of business. Even the children talk it, telling each other what wonderful things they are going to do when that time comes.

One day, one of the little girls who had been holding forth on the subject turned to our children and asked, "What are *you* going to do when your papa strikes it rich?"

They answered that they didn't know, but Jeanette came running in to ask, "Daddy, what are *we* going to do when *you* strike it rich?"

"Well, birdling, I haven't just decided, but I think we will go home," was his reply.

She ran out greatly excited to tell Mary, but they did not mention the subject again.

The next Sunday afternoon we let them go to play for a little while in the church, as the heat was intense everywhere and that seemed about the coolest place. They promised to be very quiet and only play "Sunday school" or "church" or some very quiet game.

We were sitting on the porch fanning vigorously, going in every little while to bathe our

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faces in an effort to get cool. At length Charles said: "I'm going over to see what the children are doing. They are so quiet perhaps they've gone to sleep."

The back door was open. He stepped there and looked in, then beckoned to me. I went and stood beside him. They were kneeling at the altar with their little arms around each other. Jeanette was sobbing; Mary was praying. Just as I stepped to the door she ended with, "And now, God, please help papa to strike it rich *right away*, so we can go home."

We stepped back and, holding each other by the hand, walked back to the porch and sat on the steps for some minutes in silence. Then Charles said: "Mother, I've made up my mind. I shall answer that prayer myself." I said, "I don't see how you'll do it." Then he told me that for some weeks the conviction that it would be best for us to go home had been growing on him, so he was now decided to give up the work and go back before our own Conference opened in October. Our first quarter would be up on the first of September. He would write the presiding elder to-morrow. It was probable that he would be away on the district, but the letter would be forwarded and reach him in time, so that he might send us our check for the quarter. This is a home missionary church, receiving three

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hundred dollars a year from the Home Missionary Society.

"But," I interposed, "we haven't sufficient money."

"O yes," he replied, "we shall have when we get the check for seventy-five dollars. Get out your bank and see."

I found we had almost thirty-five dollars, so I knew that as far as finances were concerned we could go. "But," I argued, "your health. We came out here to benefit that. It hardly seems right to go away without giving the climate a fair trial."

"Bother the health," he ejaculated. "I'll be all right anywhere now."

So the next morning the letter was sent, and Wednesday, the third day of September, was the time set to start home. We said nothing about our plans even to the children. Sunday morning, Charles was to announce it from the pulpit. I didn't want to go, yet there seemed no excuse for my remaining at home, so I went.

Just as the first hymn was announced a lady and little girl came in and went up toward the front, choosing a middle pew well forward, so that I had an excellent view of them. They were beautifully and tastefully dressed, having withal an unmistakable air of culture and refinement.

I heard one woman whisper to another, in the

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seat just behind me, "There's Mrs. Wainwright and Grace."

I hardly know how I got through that service. I only know I sat there and cried like a little goose, and was so angry with myself because I couldn't help it.

Charles preached on brotherly kindness and Christian sympathy—I don't see how he *could*. His voice sounded far off and sad as it does when he reads the ritual for the burial service, but he was perfectly calm.

I went home without stopping to speak to anybody—I couldn't. I don't know what the people said to Charles, but he came home feeling quite cheerful because the task was over.

Next morning quite early we received a telegram from Dr. Blank, our presiding elder, which read: "Don't go until I come. Will try to come to-morrow [Tuesday] morning."

"Well," I exclaimed, "his coming can make no difference now. We shall finish our packing to-day."

About half-after nine the Wainwright carriage drove up to our gate and Mrs. Wainwright came in. As soon as she had introduced herself and taken a seat she began to explain her coming.

"I am ashamed to come to you at this late day with apologies," she began, "but acting upon the adage that it is better late than never I decided to

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come. True, I have been away the most of the time since you came among us, but I have been home for three weeks, and could have called had I made the proper effort. Like everyone else in this country, I have been so absorbed in our own affairs that I have given little thought to anything outside. I did not make myself known to you yesterday at church—I couldn't—I felt too badly. I wish to say, however, that I appreciated the sermon and wish that I might hear more from the same source. I am truly sorry you are going, and yet I do not see *how* you could do otherwise. But before you go we want you to come and spend the day with us. I understand you plan to go on Wednesday. Could you not give us to-morrow—Tuesday?"

We assured her that we should have been delighted to accept the invitation but for the fact that we were expecting Dr. Blank in the morning.

"That need not make an atom of difference," she declared. "If Dr. Blank comes in the morning, it will be on the ten-fifteen from Denver. I will send the carriage in early for Mrs. Sherwood and the children, and you gentlemen can drive out with Gray when he comes at twelve."

We seemed to have no good excuse for not accepting the invitation, which we felt was extended in all kindness, so decided to go.

After she had gone, we remarked that the

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atmosphere seemed clearer than when she came. While we did not feel that everything had been explained, we saw a great many things in a different light. Dr. Blank is a very broad-minded Christian gentleman. He has been in this country a number of years and knows it in all its phases. He came on the ten-fifteen train as predicted, and came out with Mr. Wainwright and Charles to dinner.

I think I never met a man who seems able to see all sides of a question as fairly and understandingly as does Dr. Blank. He did not censure us for wanting to leave. In fact, he said it was but natural that we should feel as we did. At the same time he told of the struggles and hardships through which the people are passing, and explained to us that while the panic is general it strikes Colorado with redoubled force because her chief industry is paralyzed owing to the demonetizing of silver. In conclusion, he said to us: "These people are among the biggest-hearted, the most loyal people in the world. They have held aloof, feeling that because you are from the East you cannot understand the situation. Try them three more months, let them feel that you *do* understand and appreciate the situation, and if at the end of that time you still feel as you do now I will not try to persuade you to stay. In fact, I am not trying to do so now. I do not



"What do you say, little woman—shall we go home?"

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want you to decide the matter hastily, but think the matter over in all its phases before you give me your decision."

We drove in from the Wainwrights' in the late afternoon. Dr. Blank was to leave on the six-thirty train. He and Charles stood at the gate a long time. Finally I heard Charles say, "I'll go in and talk with my wife and let you know in a few minutes." The Doctor was pacing nervously back and forth on the sidewalk with watch in hand, when Charles bounded up the steps. "What do you say, little woman—shall we go home?" were his words.

"Not unless *you* want to," I replied.

"Would you be willing to stay? Would you honestly?"

"I'd be delighted."

SEPTEMBER 10. At first thought it seemed that there might be some embarrassing explanations to make, but everything worked out beautifully. To show their appreciation of our staying, the people came in on Saturday evening with a donation which was appreciated and enjoyed, and which was not counted on salary. We are beginning to get a glimpse of what big-hearted people these Westerners really are.

The heat is beginning to abate somewhat. We had quite a heavy shower recently, which freshened things quite perceptibly. One great advan-

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tage this climate has is the fact that the nights are always cool and pleasant, so that one can sleep and feel refreshed.

People who do not stop to think about the matter can scarcely realize how every class of people suffer from the closing down of one industry. The great wave of humanity now sweeping eastward is composed of every class. Every evening the plains are dotted with the white-covered wagons of the travelers, some of whom are going "back home," but the vast majority of whom are headed for the new lands soon to be opened in the Indian Territory. Three out of four when asked their destination tell you they are bound for the "Strip," hoping in this new country to make a new start.

While caravans are going in this way, hundreds of people are walking across the hot, blistering plains either to the East or to this new land of promise. Every day they come to our door asking for work enough to enable them to purchase a meal. We have no work, but we always feed them, sometimes a half dozen or more in a day.

One day there came a boy who couldn't have been more than eighteen years old, a fine, manly looking lad, whose clothing had been of the finest but was now shabby and worn. His shoe-soles were held in place by cords. He came to the

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front door like a gentleman, and when I answered his knock he lifted his cap politely and asked if I had any work I could give him whereby he might earn a bite to eat. I had no work, but I told him to sit there on the porch and I would bring him something to eat; I called and asked if he liked milk. He answered that he did, and as I handed it to him he said, "It's been ages since I tasted milk."

When he handed back the dishes he said: "I think I never tasted anything so good in all my life. You have saved me from utter despair." As I set the dishes on the kitchen table I saw him just starting across the common. I hastily buttered some bread, poured some milk into a small jar that would slip into his pocket, and ran after him with it. "Here," I said, "is a bite and a sup for later in the day. It is a long way to the next town—twenty miles."

He looked at me with tears in his eyes and accepted the food without a word. Then, suddenly, I seemed to know that he was somebody's boy who had gone out with high hopes, but had given up the battle and was returning defeated, discouraged, humiliated; but I asked no questions; I only said: "God bless you; I hope you are going home. May you get there safely!"

A few evenings later we had an even sadder case (not that they are not all sad, for they are,

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but these were of my own class and appeal more to me because I understand them better). This was a minister and his little daughter, a child of ten or twelve years. He had been pastor of a church in a small mining town where everything was now closed down and the people leaving. He had recently lost his wife and a young babe. He had one horse and a rickety old wagon in which he had his worldly possessions, chief of which was his library, and he was trying to dispose of that to procure the bare necessities of living. He had made camp for the night, and left the child with some fellow travelers to rest while he drove up to the house with the books. He said a man several miles back on the plains told him about us and advised him to come here before trying elsewhere. Charles helped him bring the box of books in the house. We were anxious to help the man, but he seemed to have nothing we needed. Such of the books as were of any value were duplicates of ones we had in our own library at home. At last I noticed the Buckeye Cook Book. "O, I'll take that," I exclaimed. "I've always wanted one." He stood a moment as though undecided and then he asked: "Would you mind looking the books over very carefully and see if there isn't *something* else you could use?" Then he added: "This was my wife's favorite book of recipes, and I

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have promised Sarah, my little daughter, that I will not sell it except as a last resort. To-night we are absolutely without food or money. If there is nothing else you can use, you may have the book, for the child must have food."

How could he stand there and say those awful words? He must think us heartless barbarians! "O, no," I cried, handing back the book, "I could not possibly take it under those circumstances. There is some other way—there *must* be."

We had never bought a family Bible. I saw that he had one, and, turning to the family record, found that it had never been used.

"Here," I said, calling to Charles, "is something we need and have been wanting; let's take this."

We bought the book, paying him five dollars for it; I think I never saw a man more grateful or more relieved. He, too, was on his way to the "Strip." I hope fortune may be kinder to him there.

XII

JANUARY 9, 1894. We have never enjoyed a pastorate more than we are enjoying this. All the work seems, somehow, so worth while. This is the only church of *any* denomination in the county. Just think! only one church in a whole vast county, while back in Pleasant Center, when it was a town no larger than this, we had three. Charles says he shall have vastly more interest in the way home missionary money is spent when he goes back East than he has had heretofore.

Speaking of missions, we had an amusing experience with a missionary box before Christmas. It was amusing to us because we were not in need of anything and were not expecting a box, hence there was no disappointment, only surprise—surprise when it came and more when it was opened. The only sorrow I felt was that there were probably other boxes like this going to other ministers and their families, who had been here through these “lean years” and are in need. If any such are expecting something to help make a bit of sunshine, what must be their disappointment!

There were garments ready for the patch, with

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the patch pinned on, if you please; and socks and stockings with the feet cut off and a pattern for a foot attached to one (to show me how to do it). There was an old dressing gown which had belonged to some dear brother back East, but evidently in days long gone by, for it was badly moth-eaten, and the silk was frayed and worn from the collar and front. Some of the undergarments were so dirty that Charles took them with the tongs and put them in the fire.

Mrs. Wainwright was in town and just happened in while we were unpacking the box. "O do come in," I called, when I recognized her tap at the door. "Hurry—we've had a wind-fall!"

I hurriedly donned the amazing hat; I had just arrayed the children, one in a ridiculous old velvet bonnet, the other in an impossible hood.

When she opened the door she exclaimed: "Goodness me! Are you fixing for a masquerade? What ever are you doing?"

"Doing? We're opening our missionary box!"

"Missionary nothing!" she exclaimed, sinking down beside me on the floor and gazing into the yet unexplored depths. "And you sit here and laugh like a little idiot! Why don't you get mad?"

"Because, my dear," I responded, "my sense

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of humor won't let me. But I have been feeling badly—I have, really—for the other women who have not good people like you to care for them, and are perhaps needing what could so easily be sent them in one of these boxes, and when they open them it will be like—O, I don't like to think what it will be like!"

What to do with the "plunder" was more than we could conjecture. There was even an immense pair of cowhide boots (I suppose they thought Charles was a sort of cowboy). "Things like those won't burn, and there certainly is not an inch of space in this house for them," I remarked.

"O, don't worry," answered Charles. "We'll set them out of doors some windy night and distribute them over the country."

"Of course," Mrs. Wainwright suggested, "every atom of this stuff is impossible so far as *you* are concerned, but there are people to whom it would be a godsend. I was just thinking of a new man Gray hired last week who has children of all ages and has recently come here from a section of Nebraska where they have had three years' drought. They are practically destitute of everything. He told me last week he would be *so* grateful for any old clothes. If you want me to, I'll have Gray send in for the box in the morning."

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We were delighted to know that, after all, the box might be able to do some good.

As I said when I started to write, we are enjoying this pastorate. Charles is getting so well and strong; in fact, we are all just as well as we can be, and I never had an idea one could be so comfortable in just four rooms. I suppose there are people who would consider us as suffering in dire poverty, but we feel quite rich. Wealth is all in one's viewpoint, anyway. When I hear people trying to create sympathy for some one who really doesn't need it I am often reminded of a half-witted old fellow I knew when I was a child. From the time I can first remember, "Old John" was a regular herald of the spring-time and harbinger of winter. He came from nobody knew where, and went nobody knew whither. He rode a stick horse and carried an old meal-sack. In the spring he asked for "jes a leetle bite o' meat fo' Siste' Nancy to season the tu'nip greens." In the autumn he carried *two* sacks, in one of which he put the "little bite o' fresh po'k" and in the other the "han'ful o' meal fo' Siste' Nancy to make batte' cakes."

Sometimes he came also in the early summer. At such times he invariably asked for "jes a scrap o' bacon so's Siste' Nancy can season the beans."

On one of these summer pilgrimages he

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encountered a family who had recently come among us and "knew not Joseph" (nor John). These were Northern people who had bought an old plantation some little distance from town. It seems the women were there alone, and, being afraid of the half-witted old fellow, sent him on his way telling him they had no bacon. They were sitting on the porch stringing beans when he called, so he wondered how they were going to meet the emergency and called back to ask, "What youns goin' to season yo' beans with?" One of the girls answered, "Butter." Old John never carried anything in his mind long, but coming directly from there to our place, I suppose it was still fresh in his mind; at any rate, after he had gotten what he asked for and had started off on a canter, he suddenly wheeled his stick horse around and came riding back to the gate and called to mother who was sitting on the porch, "Miss Go'don, O, Mis' Go'don, yo' know them pore folks on yan side o' Tu'key Creek?"

"No." Mother knew no poor folks on the other side of Turkey Creek.

"They's livin' in the ole Cunnel Sym's place, an' they's *mighty pore* folks, *mighty pore*." Here his voice fell almost to a whisper: "They ain't got no meat fo' to season they beans; youns orter go carry 'em a leetle bite."

According to him, we are *mighty rich*, for we

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have more meat than we know what to do with. Thanksgiving we had three fine turkeys given us and, besides, had three invitations to dine. We disposed of the invitations by accepting the first one. Fortunately, only one of the turkeys was dressed, so we kept the other two for Christmas and New Year.

These people bring us such loads of things to eat, we scarcely need to spend money for anything. There is a dear old couple who have a large ranch and a home in town. They were not formerly members of our church, but have recently joined it. There are scores of people here, members of other churches, with church letters in their trunks. Charles has gone to all such and persuaded them that "now is the time for all good people to come to the aid of the church." A great many have united and others attend. We have a fine choir, a good Sunday school, and always a good attendance at church. But I started to speak of Father and Mother Goodman. They spend the week on the ranch, coming into town Saturday evening to remain for the Sunday services. They always bring us something: fresh eggs, a jar of butter, a dressed chicken, or a roast of beef—always something. It is the being remembered more than what they bring that we prize.

The Wainwrights are the same way—they are

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always bringing us something. Even people whom we have never seen leave things for us at the grocery store—a ham, a jar of sausage, or one of lard. My neighbors and friends here in town send me bread, doughnuts, and cookies; in fact, I rarely ever have to bake. They do all these things besides paying very liberally. We get eight hundred dollars and the parsonage. Three hundred dollars is from the Mission Board; the other five hundred dollars comes from the people. However, they *give* almost as much as they pay. Better than all, they give us love and comradeship, which is above estimation.

I wish all the people on these plains were comfortably situated, but they are not, and it looks as though it would be a long time before that state is reached. When I feel the least bit cramped, the least bit as though four rooms constitute entirely too little space for a family to exist in comfortably, I like to get in a buggy and drive out over the plains looking at the bare “claim shanties,” “dugouts,” and “settlers’ cabins” scattered here and there—poor little excuses for shelter—sitting out on the barren plains without a tree or a shrub near them, nothing to protect from the whistling winter winds or the merciless summer sun. Many of these people haul their water in barrels for miles.

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Many girls and women are "holding down" claims, some of them two or three miles from anyone. One girl told me that she carried every drop of her water three miles, carried her clothing to the place, washed it, waited for it to dry, and then carried it home again. She is a school-teacher from Massachusetts. Her health gave way and she came here seeking health and fortune.

One man who has now "proved up" and has water on his land told us that for six months he never tasted bread; he lived on rabbits (with which the country abounds) and an occasional potato. Of such is the blood of the pioneers. Of course, this will be a great country.

JUNE 1, 1895. Two years at Plainsboro—it does not seem possible! Two years which, barring the first three months, have been among the happiest of our lives.

Charles is feeling perfectly well and strong. They write us that they need us back home, so we have agreed to be there when Conference opens or before. This Conference will be held next week, consequently, we shall have the summer in which to rest. We have decided to go sight-seeing in Colorado and camp up in the mountains for a time, as the high altitude does not now affect any of us. We are going away before the new minister comes, in order that the

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parsonage may be vacant and there can be no embarrassing circumstances connected with our departure.

The people feel badly about our going, but we feel sure they will extend a hearty welcome to our successor. We have asked them to make no demonstration for us—just allow us to “fold our tents like the Arabs and silently steal away.”

Someway, it seems to us that there is something more sacred and enduring in the friendships formed here than in most others. I believe it is always so in a new country where the people suffer hardships and privations together bravely, looking hopefully toward the future.

There certainly have been many changes in conditions since we first came to the State. The mining industry has taken on new impetus. Gold has been discovered at Cripple Creek and Victor, while Leadville, the once famous silver-mining camp, is now turning out gold in even more paying quantities. Colorado looks the world in the face with the smile of the victor as she cries, “Very well, if you don’t want our silver, here’s your gold!”

Agricultural conditions, too, are much improved. Many of the claim-holders are “proving up,” getting water on their lands, and building homes.

COLORADO SPRINGS, JULY 14. We have been

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here about a month resting and sight-seeing. We rented a cozy little cottage, quite comfortably furnished, for twenty-five dollars a month. Our living expenses are not excessively high. Everything is sold in just the quantities you may wish to buy, so there need be no loss. One can purchase ten cents' worth of wood as readily as one dollar's worth. This is preeminently the tourists' town, everything being done for their comfort and convenience. The city is more beautifully laid out and kept than any I have seen in the East. We have especially enjoyed the parks—the children have reveled in them. However, it is not so much the city as the environments that have interested us and kept us following the trail from dawn till dusk.

Of Manitou we never weary, nor of the Garden of the Gods, of Cheyenne Cañon, and the Seven Falls; but I think we enjoyed our visit to the grave of Helen Hunt Jackson most of all. Every day during the season scores of people journey thither—some with the devout wish to do honor to a loved author, others because it is considered "the thing," and still others because they follow the crowd.

We went up with quite a large party; some were on burros, but walking seemed the favorite mode. Charles took charge of the children and left me to one of the guides, whom he paid to help

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me up. He did this by taking hold of one end of my alpen stick and in a manner pulling me along over difficult places.

When we were something over half way up, a woman appeared on the heights above us and called, "Are you coming up to the grave?"

"Yes," answered the guide.

"Well, this is the best way to come down."

With the call, she began waving her arms as though getting a running start, and the last we saw of her she was going down the mountain as though it were a regular toboggan slide.

"The fools ain't all dead yet," was the guide's comment.

Pretty soon we saw another woman making the descent in a very different way, a very large woman she was, and seated on a very small burro. She seemed every moment to be just in the act of plunging forward on her head, while with every breath she begged her husband, who was leading the animal, to let her get off and walk.

Occasionally we stopped to rest. At one of these times we had come to a point from which a most entrancing view may be had. We sat for a moment on a great rock drinking in the beauty, the sublimity of vast, undulating plains and towering mountains, sat in awesome silence until the fat lady from Iowa recovered her breath.

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When this feat was accomplished she exclaimed, "Huh, ain't it funny!" She sat next me and turned to me as she made the remark. I shall always hold that it was a mark of great self-restraint that I did not push her over the precipice.

Of course, everyone knows that the body of Helen Hunt Jackson no longer rests in the grave on Cheyenne Mountain, her husband having had it removed some years ago; nevertheless, the spot it sacred to the memory of one of our best beloved. She asked no monument save that each pilgrim bring two stones to the grave and carry one away. The vast mound that marks the spot testifies to the faithfulness with which this wish is carried out.

But I have not time to tell of all the points of interest—just a line here and there. We are anxious to see the Royal Gorge, the Mount of the Holy Cross, and to cross the Divide. It is our intention to camp for a couple of months on the other side of the Divide, for after such an event we can say that we have *lived* across the Divide, and we shall never again be known as "tenderfeet." If we had only a little more money and time, we would go out to the Coast to visit the boys. They are both married and living out there now—Will in San Francisco, Tom in Los Angeles; also Charles's sister Nell is

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living in Seattle. We have that trip as a future pleasure to which to look.

O, by the way, as an example of the cruel irony of fate: after I had taken such pains to have everything in apple-pie order for the new minister's wife—had left flour, coffee, sugar, soda, baking powder, and "all such" in the kitchen cabinet, had had Charles fill the wood box, and even lay the kitchen fire—after all this the bishop sent them a bachelor who has no earthly use for the parsonage!

REST COLONY, SEPTEMBER 10. In a few days we start eastward. I must jot down a line or two to glance over and freshen my memory when recalling this pleasant summer. At Pueblo we met some charming people from Omaha and Saint Louis who were going on westward by the Rio Grande route to a little deserted town at the foot of the mountains that had at one time been quite a mining center, but now was practically depopulated. Some of the party had friends, people who were staying on in the hope that the mining industry might be resuscitated there as it had been at some other points. They told us that there were plenty of comfortable cabins which might be rented for a mere nothing, also a defunct hotel, with beds, tables, chairs, etc., likewise to be secured at one's own price. They invited us to join the crowd, which they had

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named "Rest Colony," one of the chief by-laws being that no one should work mentally or physically more than was necessary to provide the daily meals. Had we known what appetites we were to develop, what skirmishing would be necessary on the part of the men to provide the wherewithal, and what weary hours the women were to spend in preparing something with which to satisfy those same constantly increasing appetites, that by-law might have been omitted. It certainly is superfluous.

When we arrived at our destination and found everybody here resting, we thought the name we had chosen was apt. We have a little cabin next door to the deserted hotel. The Grahams are across the street, the Brownlows, who have friends here, have a more pretentious house a little way up the mountains, while the two young lady teachers from Minneapolis are down near the bridge. There are a number of children in the party, consequently, there are no dull days for our little ones.

The men go hunting and fishing; the women cook, wash dishes, and—rest. Charles is a very poor sportsman. The other men brought their guns, but Charles thought he would not invest in anything so foreign to his trade. However, the men insisted so much in his joining in the hunt that he borrowed an old rifle from a man up

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the mountain. The man had been sick and had not used the gun for some time, but had left it loaded. When Charles took a shot at a rabbit the old gun kicked him in the mouth, but with no serious results other than to slightly loosen two of his teeth; but his looks, to say the least, were badly damaged. His mouth was black and swollen for days, and the embarrassing explanations that man has had to make have been enough to make even him threaten suicide. However, he availed himself of the small boy's panacea: he slipped off alone and went fishing, and came home carrying a string of mountain trout that set the other men green with envy. When he repeated this operation two or three times I grew suspicious and pinned him down to the truth, when he confessed that he was buying them from an old fellow whom he called "Shenandoah," because he came originally from the valley of that name.

Charles, being of an exploring mind, ventured also to visit a number of the mines. While there is no mining being done here on a large scale, or even any mine operating and hiring labor, yet there are scores of men pecking away in some little hole in the side of the mountain working some one's abandoned mine or "prospecting" in the hope of striking gold, as has been done in other parts of the State.

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In these aforesaid explorations he has had all sorts of experiences, about the most amusing of which was being mistaken for a doctor. It seems there has a physician recently come to a town just below here who wears a gray suit very much like the one Charles wears and is about his size; he has been called up on the mountain once or twice since we've been here.

One day Charles was climbing up toward an opening he thought might be a mine when he heard some one shouting. He looked up and saw an old man on a ledge above him, who called, "Come up here. I can't get down there, and I need you." When he had climbed to where the man was, the old fellow began without a moment's hesitation: "You see, Doc, I'm in an awful bad fix. I'm down with the rheumatism, and I've got to the place where whisky don't do me no good, and I want you to fix me up something to knock the darn thing out."

Now, back in Pleasant Center we had a neighbor who had a serious attack of rheumatism, during which time he was confined to his bed for weeks, and the doctors gave him but little relief. An old countryman came in with a concoction of roots and herbs which worked wonders. Charles was so impressed with the value of the remedy that the next time he went to call on the convalescing neighbor he took down the names and

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quantities of the ingredients in his little red book and has served the same out to rheumatic parishioners from that time forth; so he sat down, wrote out the prescription (first asking the man if he had any way to send and get it filled, and being told that some of the boys came by every evening) and handed it to him, saying, "It'll cut the rheumatism right out, but you'll have to leave the whisky alone."

"Doc, you think the whisky is bad for me?" he asked.

"Sure," was the reply.

"Well, I'll let it alone for a while," he conceded, "and try your fancy fixin's."

About three weeks later Charles was passing in that vicinity when the old fellow hailed him and came to meet him as spry as a boy.

"Doc," he called, "I plumb forgot to pay you for that writin', but I'm going to do it now. That stuff knocked my rheumatism higher'n a kite. You reckon I'll need any more when I use up this?"

"No, I think not," Charles replied, "but keep up the rest of the prescription—leave the whisky alone."

"That's what I been a doin' so fur. Now, how much do I owe you, Doc?" he inquired.

"Nothing," answered Charles; "I don't charge you anything for the prescription."



"That stuff knocked my rheumatism higher'n a kite."

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"Charles Sherwood!" I exclaimed, when he told me about it, "you let that man go on thinking you were a physician; that was *acting a lie*." "Well, if it was," Charles returned, "it was a sort of white one that doesn't count—a doing evil that good may come—for as long as the fellow thinks the *doctor* told him to let the whisky alone he will do it, whereas, if he knew that it was a *preacher* who gave him the advice, he would go to-morrow and get drunk."

SEPTEMBER 20. We are just getting ready to leave Rest Colony, we being the last of our "tribe" to leave. We meant to go sooner and spend some time with Emily before Conference, but Gordon, her little son, has been quite sick, and their physician has ordered them to the sea-shore, so we thought we would rather stay here and rest than to go East and board. We shall always remember this summer with delight, and feel sure we shall be able to work much better after having had such a long "play spell."

We are beginning to feel that work and being in the midst of things will seem good again. I do not envy these people who must sit here and wait for something to turn up. For instance, there is the man next door, who is owner, manager, and sole occupant of the rambling old hotel. He owns also a number of store buildings, which are now vacant, as well as several residences

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which formerly brought good rental. Everything he had he tied up in real estate, and now he is sitting here waiting for some one to come and buy him out. To say he is sitting here is putting it literally. Just as regularly as the morning comes, he may be seen sitting on the back porch with his feet on the banisters, his arms folded and his hat pulled over his eyes. In the afternoon he may be seen in exactly the same position on the front veranda. I am confident he is the original man of whom the funny paragraphers have been telling us, who when asked what he could find in so lonely a place with which to occupy himself, replied, "Wal, part of the time I set an' *think*, an' part of the time I just *set*."

XIII

WESTONVILLE, NOVEMBER 10, 1895. Such busy days! It seems I have not had a moment to write since we came.

The "powers that be" intimated to Charles before we came East that they would like to have him on the Westonville District as presiding elder. There would also be a vacancy at M—— in the pastorate of the First Church. While I dreaded to have him away so much, as he naturally must be on a district, yet I felt that it would be better for him than the pastorate of a large city church. He felt the same way, so we were glad when the bishop and his "cabinet" decided on the presiding eldership for him.

On my part there was probably also a lurking grain of selfishness in the matter, for I thought I would have fewer public responsibilities. I did not see how it could be otherwise, especially as there is no district parsonage and we would be renting our own house, furnishing it as we pleased (or could), and living in it like any other Christian family. We would put our church letters in at First Church, and I would have the pleasure of sitting back with folded arms watch-

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ing the pastor's wife "run things" or "shirk her duties," as the case might be; anyway, this was one time when I would be in the game without being "it." Probably I imbibed this idea from a woman I met in my early itinerating days, a woman whose husband was always presiding elder whenever opportunity offered. I had remarked to her that it must be very trying on her for her husband to have a position in which it was necessary for him to be away so much. She answered: "Yes, but I don't like the pastorate. I like to do as I pretty please and no questions asked."

Times must have changed, for we find that instead of carrying the responsibilities of *one* church, we have in a greater or lesser degree the burdens of all the churches in the district resting upon us.

Westonville is the center of a strongly Methodist section. We have two churches and a mission here in town, while there are any number of country churches within a radius of a few miles. Also one of the oldest academies of the church is located at the next station, a few miles up the railroad. That academy is the bane of my life.

JANUARY 18, 1896. I stopped off abruptly at a very opportune place—speaking of the academy. As well as I remember, it was the academy

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that caused me to stop off; it usually is. I have stopped off so frequently for that, and other reasons, that I have scarcely gotten my house settled and this—January!

In the first place, I suppose we made a mistake in renting so large a house in so central a location. Dr. Westcoat advised us not to do it at the time, but we did not listen. Charles says if our “foresight” had only been as good as our “hind-sight,” we should have done very differently. But what’s done is done, and here we are in a good house of eight rooms. We were so tired of living in tiny cottages and felt we needed room to expand. We don’t keep any servant. I feel that we cannot afford to do so, and then I don’t really need one, or would not if things were as I expected them to be.

Charles is away most of the time, so that with only the children and myself our work would not be much; but as it is, there is an extra plate at our table almost every meal—and O, the bother and the worry and the work!

We came on here from Conference on Tuesday and went to a boarding house, from which we started out Wednesday morning house-hunting. We were quite fortunate in finding what we wanted and by the afternoon had made our selection. Then we began getting together the bare necessities, hoping to add to them month by

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month as we had money and time. We had our books sent over from Crescent City, where we had left them when we went West; we were as glad to see them as to meet any of our old friends.

Thursday and Friday we were as busy as people always are who are getting settled. On Friday I did not want to stop to dress either myself or the children to go out to dinner, so Charles brought us a tray from the restaurant. For supper we intended to eat bread and milk and in the morning get breakfast in our own kitchen. The beds were in place, the stove was up, and we were beginning to see our way through the mists.

About half-after three in the afternoon our doorbell rang, and when I answered it I found three young ladies and two young men waiting. One of the young ladies asked if this was where the presiding elder lived. Upon being answered in the affirmative she immediately introduced herself and her companions as students from the academy, come to town on a shopping expedition, who, having finished their work, had called around to get acquainted and rest until train-time. I took them in and introduced them to Charles, who hustled around and found seats for them. I did not ask the young ladies to lay off their wraps, as I understood they had only

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come for a call. Now, it happens that the young man who is principal of the academy, and also another who is teaching there, are college friends of Charles; so these being, in a sense, their children, we must be nice to them no matter how we felt.

The children, not being presentable for company, were in the kitchen. I knew they were getting restless. I knew, too, that the fire needed replenishing, so I excused myself and went out. I hunted out clean clothing and was washing the children when Charles came out.

"We're in for it now," he announced; "they've come to stay for supper. The boys have gone uptown and the girls have taken off their hats and wraps and are making themselves at home. They called to the boys and told them not to forget that the train left at seven-thirty now instead of eight. That oldest young lady—she seems to be the leader of the clan—told me that Dr. Arnold asked them where they would stay since the parsonage was shut up. [Brother Gray's family had gone to his father's on a visit.] She said she told him that didn't make any difference, she would go around and get acquainted with the presiding elder's folks and stay there; so you see the situation."

I groaned not only in spirit but audibly as I sank into a chair, exclaiming, "Of all the nerve!"

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I wished in that moment that I was back in the little parsonage at Plainsboro.

Charles went out and got beefsteak and canned peaches, and I made biscuit and stirred up a cake, while the children rummaged around and found dishes enough to set the table. When I stop to think about it, I sometimes feel that I have not been rested since that day. We have had one continuous downpour of guests. The people in that academy town must come to Westonville for everything they eat, drink, and wear, and also to procure the means to purchase the same. I know that some of them do, that young lady leader Miss Mayhew especially. She is preparing for the mission field and is being "spoiled in the making." Not the world but the church owes her a living, and she is minded to have it.

Charles had planned his work so as to hold his quarterly meetings for the Westonville churches consecutively, one on the Sunday before Christmas, and the other on the one following, consequently, he would be home for Christmas. We would not be expected to take part in any exercises, nor be responsible for any tree or entertainment. Just for *one* time in our lives we were to have a quiet home Christmas—to do, as my friend had said, as we "pretty pleased."

On the day before Christmas this is what happened: we went shopping—first Charles and I,

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then the children and I, then Charles and the children, then the children by themselves.

In the early evening we made a big coal fire in the living-room grate and were sitting around it cracking nuts and eating candy. We had just voted not to have any supper—everybody was too overflowingly full of happiness. We had decided also that we had altogether too much Christmas in stock to be disposed of in *one* day, so we were going to enjoy a part of it now. Accordingly, after much whispering and going out and in, sundry packages were brought to the hearth to be opened. First the velvet slippers with daisies embroidered on the toe that I had bought for Charles, then the felt ones trimmed in fur that he had gotten me, then the cups and saucers the children had bought us—mine with a bunch of roses painted on the side, his with a bluebird swinging on a limb. The children had just unwrapped the dollies that said “Yes,” “No,” and “Mamma,” when the doorbell rang a loud impatient peal. I laid my hand on Charles’s knee as the children ran to answer the summons. “I give you my word of prophecy,” I said, “that ring can come from none other than Catherine Mayhew.” And so it proved, for when Mary opened the living-room door she came blowing in, all smiles and pink cheeks and—I don’t like to write it—assurance.

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"You see, I decided, to spend this vacation canvassing for some books I've been handling," she began. "We're to have two weeks' vacation and I want to improve every moment, and I knew this would be a first-rate time in which to find everybody at home. I want Brother Sherwood to write a recommendation of the books and introduce me to some of the business men. Of course, all our *own* people will take the books; Brother Gray promised me quite a while ago that he would do so as soon as he could possibly get the money, so I shall expect him to head the list." All this time she was undoing the books, getting them ready to display. "Mother, Home, and Heaven, and The Royal Path of Life," she continued; "I'm sure I shall do well with them, they are both such excellent works. I should have gone to Brother Gray's—I'm always welcome there—but his wife isn't well, and they have such a houseful of children, and so I thought, if you didn't mind, I'd make headquarters here."

Of course she made headquarters "here," and it goes without saying that all the sweet Christmas atmosphere was swept up the chimney and disappeared in smoke. It ought not to have done so, but it *did*. We talked about it after we went to bed and decided that we are a very selfish family not to be able to share our home more ungrudgingly. Next day, however, we didn't do

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much better—it's a whole lot easier to make resolutions than to carry them out. I think I might be able to adjust myself to Catherine and her interruptions more readily if she did not continually rub me the wrong way, and also if there were not so many others to whom I must adjust myself.

All the people on the district are nice to Charles. They kill their finest chickens and put him to sleep on their best feather beds, so when they come to town they expect to receive a like courtesy at our hands. They forget that there is only *one* of him but *scores* of them. We do love to be hospitable, but we dislike to exercise the virtue because we *must*. I was so hurt, in fact, quite indignant, when Dr. Westcoat passed through town last week and instead of coming to us went to a hotel, and only ran in for a little visit between supper and bedtime. When we took him to task for it he said: "I've been hearing how things are going. I gave you children"—I suppose he'll call us children till we're gray-haired—"good advice, but you would have your own way. I could not think of adding to your burdens."

After all, it did seem nice just to have a good visit without having to worry about what you are to get to eat for supper and breakfast.

But knowing beforehand is as nothing compared with having them pop down on you just at

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mealtime all unannounced. This is quite a railway center. I am thinking seriously of sending in a petition to the head officers of the different roads asking them to make better connections. As it is, I don't believe there is a single train coming in that connects with anything going out, and I'm getting tired of feeding the passengers. The number of wives, aunts, sisters in law, whose relative is a friend of my husband, that have come to me for food and shelter "until the next train goes out" is appalling.

If I have to endure four years of this, I shall surely be gray-haired before my time.

SEPTEMBER 25. This is our eleventh anniversary. Everyone else is in bed asleep, but I felt like I wanted to write a while. Emily and her family have been with us for a visit—Eugene came yesterday to be with us to-day, and on to-morrow they start home. I have had a servant since the first of June. I was absolutely compelled to have one. I was worn to the ragged edge. I have heard a great deal about the wives of city pastors being "stuck up" and not welcoming country people, but I know now they have been driven to it in self-defense.

I deliberately gave Catherine the cold shoulder this summer, but she turned around and smote me on the other. The county normal is held here. I heard, incidentally, that Catherine, being out

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of funds, was going to teach in the fall, so, of course, she would be on hand for the normal. Fortune in the form of a minister's widow favored me this time. She lives a few miles below here and frequently calls in to see me when she is in town, but never has imposed upon me in the least. She was here one day and was saying how anxious she was to have Helen attend the normal, but that she really had not the money for the month's board. I immediately told her to let Helen come right to me, that I would be glad to have her, that I had a servant now, so the work would be no tax, and as to the expense it was a mere nothing, adding that if, however, Helen secured a school and wished to pay me, she could do so later. She was overjoyed to have it so, and suggested that one of Helen's friends was going to attend, but had not as yet secured a boarding place, so, as I had a servant, perhaps the tax would be no greater to take the friend also and thus help out expenses. I was delighted, because I would really much rather have two girls than one, and then, secretly, because it would effectually bar the door against aggressive Catherine.

I shall never forget the look on the face of Miss Catherine when I informed her that I had no possible room to spare and suggested several places where I knew there were rooms to let

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for light housekeeping if she did not feel able to board.

We had a strenuous month. The girls were young, pretty, and popular, consequently there was much coming and going, together with late hours. Charles was home during the last week and we went out to quite a number of lectures. We were none of us sorry to see the last Friday evening and hailed Saturday as a day of deliverance. Charles left on an early train. The young ladies went at noon. Huldah, the servant, was tired of cooking and declared she didn't want to see anything to eat for a week. The children said if I would buy a big watermelon for Sunday they wouldn't ask for anything else. Huldah had baked nice light bread and cookies, and there was plenty of fruit and milk—everybody was going to rest.

I started up town to purchase the melon. Presently I heard some one call, "Mrs. Sherwood, O, Mrs. Sherwood," and before I could determine from which direction the call came some one slapped me on the shoulder, exclaiming between her gasps for breath: "My goodness, you-do-walk fast. I've been trying to catch you for a whole block. I saw your girls went off on the noon train, so I thought I'd come and stay with you over Sunday and maybe a day or two next week until I hear from a school I've applied

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for. It would save me the trouble and expense of going home and back." Of course I took her in. What else could I do?

I believe I should almost as soon have faced a cannon as to go back to the kitchen and tell Huldah. She didn't do a thing but lay her head on the table and cry. I felt like a guilty wretch as I stood there trying to comfort her by telling her that I would help her all I could and saying, "Just give her what we have; don't go to extra trouble."

She raised her head and glared at me scornfully as she ejaculated, "My good land, Mis' Sherwood, I hope you don't think I'm fool enough to try and fill that Miss Catherine up on that kind of truck."

The minister from the academy town is almost as much of a nuisance as Catherine. He has a habit of coming to town on the morning train, doing his errands or whatever he comes for, and dropping in here just as the whistle is blowing for noon. He had repeated this performance several times, and each time Huldah had taken pains to prepare more dinner. I finally told her she was never to do it again. The next time he happened in, Charles was at home. We are all extravagantly fond of peach cobbler with milk. Charles had asked at breakfast if we could have one for dinner. I instructed Huldah to prepare

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nothing else, as we never ate anything but the pie when we had one.

Now, as good fortune would have it, just after we were seated at the table, in walked Brother Strong. Huldah looked at me beseechingly through the open half of the kitchen door, but I gave her a look which said, "Not on peril of your life!" So she didn't bring even bread and butter. Charles with all the suavity of carving a turkey dished up a plateful of the pie, saying as he did so, "Brother Strong, may I help you to some of the pie and a glass of milk?"

"Well, just a little of the pie perhaps, but I don't drink milk."

Charles handed it to him with his most Chesterfieldian air as he said, "Ah, that's too bad; this seems to be our bill of fare to-day."

He left shortly after dinner and we watched him go down the street to a restaurant, where no doubt he bought his dinner, which I couldn't help thinking was what he ought to have done in the first place. I was greatly elated, for I thought he was "broke" of the bad habit, but he wasn't.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1900. We are about to finish our four years on the district and shall be more than glad to get back to the pastorate. We are not the kind of people for the presiding eldership. Charles dislikes to be away from home, and we

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dislike even more to have him away. Besides, for a man who is not physically rugged the work is very hard, calling for much exposure in all kinds of weather, as well as much anxiety in the care of so many churches. Then, too, it interferes with all regular habits of study, and Charles is naturally studious. As to the honor the position carries, we do not care for those things, feeling it as much of an honor to do our duty well in one capacity as another. Speaking of honors, Charles had the degree of D.D. conferred upon him by his alma mater last June. So now he is "Doctor Sherwood," but I do not think I can ever become accustomed to calling him that except, perhaps, when speaking of him very formally.

We have been merely existing for the past two years. I am so hungry for a home again; it is not so bad for me, but I feel that a home is a necessity for the girls. So often during these years I tried to console myself with the philosophy of a dear woman of whom I knew when I was in college. I had a roommate once, a lovely girl who had a most wonderful mother, whom she was always quoting. This woman was the mother of *ten* children and had lived all her life on a poor little farm, as poor as poverty, yet every one of those ten children had a college education. Of course, the older ones helped the

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younger ones through, but the mother was the main impetus. She wrote beautiful poems, many of which she sold. She sold one to the Atlantic and with the money bought Helena's graduating dress. Helena showed them both to me as soon as they came. I think she was even more proud of the poem than of the dress.

When I handed back the magazine I said, "Helena, I don't see how in the world your mother does it."

She looked at me a moment and then she said: "That's because you don't know mother. She told me once when I was little that she used to be very unhappy until she learned that we do not have to *live* where we *exist*. She says there are so many duties that can be performed just as well if the mind is occupied with other things. Some of her most beautiful poems have been composed while she was busy over the washtub, or doing the dishes, or rocking the baby to sleep, she told me."

So, here in these three rooms, I try to be philosophical and to think of broader things, but it is hard sometimes when everything gets topsy-turvy, with the children's dolls and doll rags, paper dolls, and schoolbooks all out of place, and nowhere to keep our clothes but trunks; no place to hang hats and wraps but the hall. O, well, it will all be over soon. In the meantime it was

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our friends (?) who brought us to this state of affairs.

I was getting fairly hardened in duplicity. I remember the first time I was caught in the snare of the Evil One. The children had gone to school. Huldah was sick, and I had just gone up to see if she wanted anything and was starting downstairs when I remembered that the windows of our sleeping room had not been opened and went back to attend to that duty. Just as I was in the act of throwing open the shutters, I saw through the open slats a familiar figure approaching. It was our friend the academy pastor, accompanied by his wife and several children. I saw them some distance up the street, so I had time in which to meditate mischief. I ran to Huldah's room and told her of the situation. "Now," I said, "we will let them ring until they are tired."

They rang and rang; finally I heard them try the door, but it was locked, the children having gone out the side entrance. After this they gave up trying to rouse us and I watched them file off headed toward Brother Gray's. I knew I was as able to wait upon them as was Mrs. Gray, and I called myself a selfish wretch, nevertheless, I did not run out and call them back.

But the straw that broke the camel's back was the Rev. Dr. N——, a famous lecturer, who

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encamped with us because, as he told us frankly, his train left at 4 A. M. and the hotel would not give him breakfast at that hour. He did not reach X—— until nearly noon, and by that time, he assured us, he would be suffering from a headache, as he always did when deprived of breakfast, and thus be unable to fill his place on the program. I wondered what I should want some woman to do for my husband should he be found in such a predicament, although I hoped devoutly that he would have more sense than to thrust himself upon the sympathies of a woman without a servant, and with two children just getting up from scarlet fever, which was my situation at the time of Dr. N——s visit. Whenever I see this man's name upon Chautauqua programs, as I frequently do, I always wonder what woman got up in the dead hours of night to prepare his breakfast. Of course I ought not to do so, but I *do*.

Dr. Westcoat has always told us that we need a guardian, and after this episode we began to think so too, but decided to break up and go to boarding as the best way out of our difficulties. Huldah had left us after the first year, her only complaint being "too much company." After this, we were never able to keep a girl longer than a month or two at a time (they all gave the same excuse), and for some time before we broke up

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they would not even answer my "standing advertisement" in the *Clarion*.

We dreaded to go to boarding, especially on account of the children. We didn't know what in the world we would do with Jeanette, she being a reincarnation of all the tomboys since the days of "Maggie Tolliver."

We gave up our house, stored our goods, and tried a good boarding house. But we are not suited to boarding-house life. I was miserable without my home duties and the food did not agree with the children; besides, I had to keep both them and myself on dress parade all the time, and then, too, the children were getting "pert," and I was developing into a regular "granny."

I came to the conclusion after a particularly exasperating day that I could endure that particular form of life no longer. Charles was not at home; but if he had been, I disliked to bother him with so much complaining, so decided to do what I did without waiting for his consent. I had decided upon "light housekeeping," so started out to find rooms. I had difficulty in finding what I wanted because at all the desirable places they objected to children, but finally I came upon these three rooms, and while they left much to be desired, I gladly took them as at least a temporary relief. I selected such of our goods

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as we would need and was all moved and settled when Charles came home. I am sure he was no prouder or happier when we first set up house-keeping than he was that day, and I know I was not. While this is a sort of makeshift for a home, it is really a great deal better than anything we have had in a long time. We no longer have to entertain the populace, and we have some privacy.

We have talked over our experiences a great deal in trying to decide just what our position on this question is, and have decided that it is not that we are selfish, but that every family needs the privacy of a home, and that when that privacy is continually broken into, the home no longer meets the demands of the family.

Besides, so much entertaining is expensive. We are getting on in years, the children are growing up, and we feel that we ought to be putting by something toward their education, but not one penny were we able to save until we gave up that house.

XIV

NOVEMBER 20, 1900. We were sent this year to the First Church in X——, the largest and most important church in the Conference. There are several hundred members, too many, in fact, for us to be likely to form many intimate friendships. However, every situation has its advantages as well as its disadvantages. The work being divided into departments, headed by able men and women, Charles has really not so much to do as he has often had in smaller churches. He need not fear having to stop his work on a busy day to sweep and dust the church, as he used frequently to do in Patricia, nor yet be called upon suddenly to teach the "Young Men's Bible Class."

The people do not expect nor seem to want "pastoral calls," except in case of illness, and even then the deaconess is more often called than the pastor, so the "little red book" has served its day.

Cousin Constance will be delighted to know that at last her plans of regular hours for study and for receiving business calls are being put into practice.

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I am even contemplating establishing an "afternoon" so soon as I make some necessary additions to the parsonage china.

The parsonage is a rather new brick house of nine rooms, with toilet and bath and all modern conveniences. It is comfortably, even tastefully, furnished, and thus far no committee has waited upon me to suggest what ought to be done or left undone, which courtesy I most heartily appreciate.

So far as I am able to judge, I think the minister's wife is rather a figurehead. I don't think there is much expected of her except to keep the beautiful house in apple-pie order and herself and her children fashionably dressed, which is no small job. I am thankful we did not come directly here from the West, for I with my serge skirts and plain shirt waists and one "best dress" must have given the church a "shock" which would have proved fatal, at least, to my popularity.

JANUARY 6, 1901. I find I was mistaken concerning my prognostications which had to do with the minister's wife and outside duties. They were only letting me get adjusted to the situation, sort of "acclimated," as you may say, or perhaps taking time to "size me up" before venturing to invite and suggest.

In due time I was waited upon by committees

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from the Woman's Home Missionary Society, the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, The Helpers (another name for the Ladies' Aid), The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, The Friday Club (which is studying Shakespeare), The Mothers' Club (which is studying Young America), also various and sundry other clubs whose names and objects I do not now recall; but that makes no difference, for I have, as Charles says, "jined" the most of them, thereby signing away my right to liberty and freedom so long as I remain in X——, because, of course, if *one* society is not meeting, or having a "call session," or getting ready for a "public," *another one is*.

MOUNTAIN VIEW, JUNE 30, 1904. Yes, I am here "resting," while my family at home need me every day and hour, and I *know* they need me; but matters had reached a crisis—the doctor's word was law. Yes, I, who have always looked with pity and a little contempt upon women with "nerves," I, the strong-minded, have come to *this*. To be sure "this" is not so bad—a quiet little house in a quiet little place with nothing worse than the impertinent frogs ever croaking, "She can't, she can't," until I have a mind to go out some night and wring the last one of their necks just to show them that I *can*. No, there's nothing except these silly noises to keep me from sleeping from dark till dawn, or any

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other time, but I don't do it. How can I when I know I ought to be home this minute getting the girls' clothes ready for school, and putting up fruit, and doing a thousand and one other things?

When I mentioned the clothes to Charles he said, "Pshaw! that's nothing—we'll buy them ready-made." (I don't think a man ever does come to understand such things.) "As to the preserve and jelly-making," he declared, "we'll get on beautifully with honey and syrup."

You want to know what brought me here? Physically speaking, my physician brought me by main force, but, really and truly, dissipation brought me. Not cards—I never played a game in my life; not wine—I never drank a drop except at the communion table; nor yet dancing nor the opera—I never attended a dance and have only attended the opera once, and that was when I visited Emily. No, it was not *fashionable* dissipation that brought me this bitter experience, but church and philanthropic and intellectual dissipation, all of which masquerade under the guise of duty, thereby drawing silly women into their nets and weaving the meshes about them more securely than ever "Society" dares to do. Sometimes I feel like exclaiming with—I don't seem to remember just who it was exclaimed, I don't remember much of anything these days—but,

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anyway, he or she, whoever it was, "O religion, how many crimes are committed in thy name!"

If one could rest anywhere, one ought to be able to do so here, with this dear woman, Aunt Hester, to mother them. Everyone calls her Aunt Hester. Our physician knew her when he was a boy, and since he began to practice has sent many patients here for the "rest cure."

I felt a little resentful the other day when Aunt Hester told me we were to have company. I don't want to see anybody from the "world"; but when I found that this niece and her little daughter who were coming to visit are from Colorado I felt differently about the matter—I wanted to see them. I went to sleep that night thinking of Plainsboro and of our friends there and of the simple, happy life we led, went to sleep and slept all night for the first time in months.

Aunt Hester has been telling me quite a little about the niece who was left an orphan at an early age. She, Aunt Hester, was the child's only near relative. She cared for her and gave her an education sufficient to enable her to teach in the district school, but she was married quite young to a worthy young man of the village and they were getting along nicely when an attack of pneumonia left the husband with weak lungs and the doctors advised him to go to Colorado.

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They went out there and took up a homestead, but after a few years he died, leaving the wife and three small children. Aunt Hester always concluded the talks with, "An' I guess she's had it nip and tuck to pull through, but she's done it somehow."

JULY 20. The niece and the little daughter have come—have been here more than a week. I feel that I might have known them always. I was never so surprised as when I first saw them. I had formed my own picture of the homesteader ranchwoman as I had known her and added to this the fact that this one was a widow with three children and had been battling against odds for a number of years. I therefore fancied that she must be worn and tired and stooped. Sometimes I almost dreaded to have her come, I was afraid she might be too much of a tax upon my "nerves." Well, I had a shock which straightway did my nerves unmeasured good.

I cannot describe the woman; I do not know this moment whether her eyes are brown or black; I only know they have the look of heavenly peace, and that every time I look into them I feel like stretching out my hand and crying, like an impetuous child, "You have something that I want—give it to me—give it to me!"

On her face are some deep lines which show that a tragedy has been enacted within, but there

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are none of the fretful worry lines nor the frowns that chase the smiles away.

She is always so cheerful and bright and enjoys to the utmost going about with her old friends. Aunt Hester says, "Alice acts younger than she did when she was twenty."

As to the child, I see very little of her because they have told her she must not "bother" me, but she appears quite as remarkable as her mother.

AFTERNOON. I left off here because Aunt Hester came up to talk with me a while. I was writing out on the balcony when she came out, declaring that the stairs just about took "the tuck out of her," and adding, "but I wanted to talk to somebody, an' Alice has gone over to Sue's, an' Margaret is over playing with Johnnie, and, anyway, I wanted to ask if you heard what Margaret said to Roscoe about his kite."

"His kite? Why, no, not that I remember."

"I guess you'd remember good an' well if you'd heard her; I's a settin' out on the side porch a mendin', an' they's in the yard a flyin' Roscoe's kite. All of a sudden it seems the boy let loose of the string an' couldn't reach it. Margaret just jumps off the ground like a cat jumpin' at a bird an' grabs the string. When he'd got done thankin' her he says, 'I'm awful glad you got it, 'cause if it had been a second longer, the string would have been too far up an' the kite

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would have sailed away off to heaven, an' God would have took it and gave it to some of the little angels to play with.'

"I listened for her to say that little angels didn't have no use for kites, or somethin' like that, but no, sir. She just says, 'God wouldn't take it away from you to give to anybody else. God don't love anybody any better than he does you. God ain't off up in heaven, he's right here with you, an' when you want him to help you all you got to do is to ask him.'

"Roscoe looked at 'er sort o' dubious like, an' then he asks her, 'Did you ask him to help you git the kite?'

"'Of course, I always do,' she says.

"'Land-a-livin'!' says I to myself, 'if that don't beat my time—askin' the Lord to let go the universe, so to speak, jest to ketch a kite string.' If I hadn't been having it in small doses, regular, for most two weeks I believe it would have give me a 'turn.'

"Not that Margaret is the least mite uppish or forward, or ever says anything about her ideas unless somebody else broaches the subject, which I don't mean to do, but it seems like their religion mixes in with everything under the canopy.

"I ain't never undertook to take a hand at suggestin' but once, an' then I got set back so fur I ain't ketched up yet. It was one night when

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somebody come after Alice to go to spend the evenin' some'rs an' when bed time come I says to Margaret, 'I'll go 'long up an' carry the lamp.'

" 'O, you don't need to, auntie,' she says, 'I know the way; I don't need any light.'

"When Alice was that old I could no more have persuaded her to go to bed in the dark than I could have got her to try jumpin' off the house-top, so just to see what she would say I says, 'Wouldn't you be afraid?'

" 'Afraid of what?' says she.

" 'O, nuthin,' says I, 'there ain't anything to hurt good little girls.'

" 'Course not—God is everywhere,' says she, and with that she started off toward the stairs. But I picked up the lamp and went along, supposin' she'd need me to unbutton her clothes, but she had 'em off an' jumped into bed before you could say Jack Robinson."

" 'Mercy me, dearie,' says I, 'don't you say any prayers?'

" 'Yes, certainly,' says she, 'as soon as I'm all cuddled down in bed I have a good long talk with God, unless I'm too sleepy. If I am, I tell God good-night and go right off to sleep. I don't wait till night to talk to God about anything important, because, you know, I might forget it, so I just tell him anything I want to tell him, or ask him anything I want to ask right when I think about

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it. Mother says that's the best way. She says to always have your heart pure and sweet, so you'll feel like prayin' any time, is what she thinks it means when it says in the Bible, "Pray without ceasing." Don't you think that's what it means?' she asked me.

"'I shouldn't wonder if it did,' I says, an' I took the lamp, an' went downstairs. 'Out of the mouths of babes an' sucklings,' says I to myself—'I reckon I'm beginnin' to know what *that* means.'

"Next mornin' I concluded I'd speak about it to Alice, so I says: 'Alice, Margaret is a mighty sweet, religious child, but don't you think she makes most too free with the Deity? Now, in my bringin' up children was taught to have some fear of the Almighty.'

"She just smiled that sweet smile of hers an' says, 'Don't you think, Aunt Hester, that perfect love casts out fear?'

"Of course I knew that was what the Good Book says, so I said, 'Yes, I suppose it does.' It seems like a mighty comfortin' kind of religion. I only hope it ain't wicked."

"Wicked!" I exclaimed; "Wicked—how *could* it be wicked?"

"I'm sure I don't know, only it all seems so different. I thought mebby you, bein' a minister's wife, would know what's the difference

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between it an' mine—an' yours," she added, hesitatingly.

"I'll admit that it does seem very different, Aunt Hester, and from what you have told me I can draw but one conclusion—they take the Bible for a guide, while we profess to do so, and then straightway turn aside and follow our own devices."

AUGUST 10. Last week a letter from home was lost or miscarried. I worried myself into a nervous headache and imagined all sorts of things. Aunt Hester tried in vain to comfort me, telling me that "No news was good news," and that if anything serious was the matter, I would surely be notified, and yet I went right on acting as though I thought some member of the family was dead and buried.

In the afternoon Aunt Hester came up. "Honey," she said as she put back my hair and laid a cool hand on my forehead, "I do wish you could get to feelin' more like Alice does about such things. You know her two boys ain't but fifteen an' thirteen an' they're a runnin' the ranch while she's away.

"Last week she was expectin' a letter, but didn't get any. Margaret felt pretty bad, but Alice said, 'I expect they've been too busy to go to the office; you know they said in their last letter they was goin' to begin cuttin' the alfalfa.'

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“ ‘Mercy sakes!’ says I, ‘I’d think you’d be distressed to death about ’em for fear they’d get cut on the machinery, or mebbby the horses would run away an’ them get tangled up in the lines an’ drug to death. Land-a-livin’, I don’t see how you stand it.’

“ ‘Their heavenly Father is with them, Aunt Hester,’ says she, just for all the world like she’d a said, ‘Deacon Jones is lookin’ after ’em,’ only more emphatic like.

“ ‘She see I looked sort o’ dumfounded, so she explained like this: ‘Every mornin’ we all repeat the ninety-first psalm when we first wake. Aunt Hester, how *can* any harm come to us when we believe those precious promises?’

“ ‘After she’d run over to see Sue I got my Bible an’ read that psalm, an’ I wish you’d read it too.’

“ ‘Do you suppose she would come up and sit with me a while and tell me something of how she came to this wonderful place of trust?’ I asked.

“ ‘I’m sure she’d be more’n glad to come. I’ll send her as soon as she comes in from her walk.’

When my friend came up she brought a handful of wild flowers. “See,” she called, “what I’ve brought you. Don’t they make you think of the time when you were a little girl and ran over the hills to gather them? And smell—they smell exactly like ‘tag’ and ‘ring-around-a-rosy,’ and

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tin dinner pails filled with 'school dinner,' and all the good times of childhood. I'm going to put them in a glass right here by the bed, and then if you'll let me I'd love to brush your hair. Perhaps it may help your head."

"O, I'd love it," I cried; "and while you're brushing it would you mind talking to me, telling me something of how you came to this abiding under the shadow of the Almighty? Sometimes, I feel that I have come to the place, but I don't *abide*. I stray off and go my own way and am wretched."

"Certainly, if it will help you any, I shall be glad to tell you of some experiences that have come to me, although there are some years the memory of which is far from pleasant.

"Aunt Hester has told you about our going West. You have been there and know what it means to the homesteader when the water fails, and especially to the homesteader with small means. We had 'proved up' and had paid for water-right on forty acres and seeded it to alfalfa. It took almost our last dollar, but we had high hopes of a good yield. However, the ditch was new, the system not perfected. The water failed us at a critical time and everything was lost. Will was desperate. The anxiety sapped his life blood. The 'thing he greatly feared came upon him,' and in six months he went to his grave.

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"The year following his death was a veritable nightmare; the two succeeding ones were little better. I sold the cow and the horses to meet our bills. I was afraid to try seeding any of the land lest I lose my few remaining dollars. I might have done better had I not been so pitifully anxious to snatch at every opportunity whereby I thought a dollar might be saved or earned and so afraid to venture in the spending.

"October of the third year had come. I could patch and darn and make over, thus eking out clothing; but food and fuel and shoes—from whence were they to come? Tom was now ten, and I think that he realized that something was preying upon me, but I think he thought my depression due to my grief for his father.

"One night when I had gone to bed thinking upon all these things I had a dream, such a terrible dream! I saw a pack of wolves coming straight toward our door. I ran in a frenzy of fear to bolt and hold the door. At last I felt that I could hold out no longer alone and called Tom to my assistance. When I awoke from the nightmare I cried out: 'It is poverty seeking to come in and despoil my little ones! It *shall* not—I *will* not let it!'

"The next day I determined to tell Tom of our situation; accordingly, I sent the younger

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children out to play, bidding Tom remain to help me with some work. So soon as they were out of hearing I poured out my troubles to the child—told him all our miserable condition.

“He sat for a long time in silence, then, looking up into my face, he said, ‘But, mother, God will take care of us.’

“‘I’m afraid not, Tom,’ I replied. ‘I fear God has forgotten us. Poverty has come to encamp with us, but we *must not* let it; we must drive it off and we must do it *now*.’

“‘But we have tried, mother, I’m sure we’ve *tried*. It isn’t our fault. How much money have we?’ was Tom’s response.

“‘O Tom, don’t ask me,’ I cried. ‘Only a little, so little that sometimes when the children ask me for bread my hand trembles until I can scarcely cut it. I am so afraid, so afraid, dear, that sometimes they will ask and there will be none to give.’

“He came and put his arms around me and kissed me as he said: ‘Don’t cry, mother. I’ll help you all I can. I don’t see just how I can do much, but you won’t mind if I ask God to help us, will you?’

“‘Certainly not, dear; ask him if it will comfort you any,’ I answered.

“Tom had always been devoutly religious, but we had never encouraged him in talking of such

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things because we felt that it was unnatural and tended to make him morbid.

"After a while he came to me with the open Bible. 'Mother,' he asked, 'isn't this the Word of God?'

" 'Yes, Tom.'

" 'Mother, don't you believe that God tells the truth?'

" 'Yes, dear.'

" 'Listen, then, to this verse: "Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." Mother, why doesn't that mean *us*?'

" 'O Tom, I don't know *what* it means,' I cried, 'I only know that I am miserable and desperate, afraid to trust and afraid not to. Don't think any more about it, son. Mother ought not to have taxed you with such things.'

"The child took his Bible and went out of doors. I threw myself across the bed and cried until I could cry no longer—then suffered the inevitable result, a severe headache. When the children came in and found me suffering from a headache they protested against my getting up, declaring that they didn't want any supper. Before it was really dark they kissed me good-night and crept off to bed. I heard them tell Tom that they saw a schooner-camp down by the road.



"Mother," he asked, "isn't this the Word of God?"

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"After the children were all asleep I was still lying there thinking—thinking, with that awful sense of fear tearing out my very heart-strings, when I heard a sound as of some one singing.

"Singing! It had been years since I heard anyone sing. I got up and opened the window. It was a woman's voice that came to me, the voice of a woman past middle life, I knew by the quaver. I could not distinguish the words, but the tune came to me distinctly on the still night air, and the words came to my mind unbidden. I put my hand over my heart to make sure it was beating; I clutched at my throat to press back the great lump that seemed strangling me. It was almost the only thing that I remembered about my mother—that hymn. As she went back and forth from pantry to kitchen and from kitchen to pantry, fragments of it floated out to me as I sat arranging my bits of broken china, or rocking my rag doll to sleep in my playhouse, beneath the pantry window:

"The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures."

"I seemed actually to smell the old-fashioned pinks in the garden and the climbing rose over

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the pantry window. I rushed to the beds, kissed the children, closed the window and put a lamp on the table; then catching up an old shawl, threw it around me and went out into the night. It was bright moonlight and I was not afraid, so I determined to walk in the direction of the camp-fire. I did not want to be seen, but I felt that I *must* have a glimpse of that woman's face.

"As I neared the camp I changed my course so as to approach from behind. There was no one visible except the woman, who was sitting on a wagon seat before the fire with a coffee pot and skillet at her feet. As I bent forward, hoping to get a glimpse of her face, I stepped on a bit of the brush, which had probably been dropped as they carried it up from the river; it crackled beneath my feet and the woman looked around as she asked, 'Is that you, pappy?' Seeing me, she explained: 'I thought it was my old man, though I thought he sure had made a quick trip. He went over to the town—five miles, ain't it? A man back there a bit told us it was five miles from the bridge. Come and set a bit. Do you live close about here? Why, bless my heart! you're all tuckered out. You've been a runnin'—there ain't nuthin the matter, I hope?'

" 'No,' I assured her, 'there is nothing the matter, only I heard you singing, and it had been so long since I heard anyone sing, and I was so

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homesick and so lonely, I just wanted a glimpse of your face.'

"She had such a dear, motherly face, and she put her arm about me in such a protecting way as I sat there beside her on the seat that before I knew it I was telling her all my poor, miserable story, and I ended with, 'And if you're going to take up a homestead, I know of a good one not far from me.' But she told me they were not looking for land; they were only taking a little journey to see their youngest son.

" 'You see, it's like this,' she explained. 'We've raised all our children. They're all married an' settled, an' they got the idy that it'd be a mighty nice trick for us to start out an' visit 'em all. I took right smart to the idy myself when it come to visitin' the nigh ones, but when Jeems writ that he's married an' settled 'way out in Colorado I said to my old man, "That's a hoss of another color. I git all the ridin' on steam kyars I want when I go to Asheville an' back, an' I ain't never been outen No'th Ca'liny. I sure don't want to start to go that fur." Then the old man 'lowed we'd go with the hosses, an' so we started out, an' a mighty fine time we've had so fur, an' we're mighty nigh thar.

" 'No, honey,' she continued, 'I won't be here to help you—I wish I could—but you have a Friend who's here all the time who can do more

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for you than everybody else. Honey, are you acquainted with God?’

“What a strange question! Was I? ‘I’m afraid not very well,’ I answered. ‘I believe in God and I belonged to the church back home, but I’ve always been afraid I wasn’t good enough for God to take much interest in me. I can’t trust and I can’t believe like other people, and I can’t be good. I don’t see why I have so much trouble, if God loves me.’

“‘You poor lamb, that’s only because you don’t understand what God is like. Don’t the Good Book say, “Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord loves us”? an’ don’t it say just plain in so many words, “God is love”? Honey, you’ve read all them things; you learned ’em by heart when you went to Sunday school mebbby, but you ain’t never *believed* ’em; you *thought* you did, but you didn’t; you’ve been a worshipin’ the Unknown God. Whilst you have fear, you can’t know God, for he says in his Word, “Perfect love casts out fear.” When you git to *know* God you’ll know that all these things is true, just as true as your children know your promise is when they come in and ask you for some bread, an’ you look in the oven an’ say, “It ain’t quite done, but as soon as it’s done I’ll give you some.” Do they go off an’ say, “I don’t believe there’s any bread *in* the oven; an’ if there

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is, I don't believe she'll give us any"? You know they don't; you'd be awful hurt if they *did*. But there *might* be such a thing as them not gitten' the bread: they might git busy playin' an' forgit to come after it, or you might git busy in some other place an' forgit the bread an' let it burn up. But God never gits too busy to 'tend to our wants, an' he don't have to wait to bake the bread. What's that he says about knowin' we have need of all these things before we ask, an' before we call he hears, an' while we are yet speakin' he answers? Honey, if our expectation is from God, it *can't* fail. "My soul, wait thou upon God; my expectation is from him." Have you ever said that and thought what it means?'

" 'No,' I answered, 'I'm afraid I have never asked for anything and believed that I would get it. I think I have usually felt that "I wish God would give me this or that, but I'm afraid he won't"; and late years I've been so discouraged; I've worked and planned, and tried and failed, and it has seemed to me that God hasn't cared, and I've just gone on trying to bear my burdens alone without asking or expecting anything.'

" 'You poor, dear child!—an' him all the time a-stretchin' out his hands a-waitin' to take the burden, an' you not a-knowin', an' a-thinkin' he

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didn't care. You go home an' git out your Bible an' study all about what God is, an' what he can do, an' what he lays out to do for all them as asks in faith believin'—you do all these things an' see what will happen to you.'

" 'But temporal blessings,' I protested; 'they are my present need. God will not supply manna as he did to the Israelites, nor bread and flesh as he did Elijah.'

" " "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." My child, God knows you have need of all these things, and he says he will supply all our need. O, honey'—she laid her hand upon mine beseechingly—'honey, *believe* God.'

"Her husband had returned by this time, and she insisted that I must have 'a bite and a sup' with them, and to please her I consented. When I started she insisted on walking a part of the way with me and also on sending the children a bit of the fine ham that I had praised at supper. As she bade me good-by she asked me to promise that for one week I would try her plan—choose every morning something that I felt would help me most, for example, 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,' or, 'My God shall supply all your need.'

"I promised her. 'I would have promised her

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anything,' I told myself as I walked on alone; 'she had been so good, and seemed so interested; and yet she says God is even more interested—cares for me as I care for my babies.' The thought came over me as a great wave of light—'My babies—what would I not do for them if I was able? *And he is able!* He loves me; he knows that I need food and fuel and clothing, and he is able to give them to me.'

"That was my first feeble conception of the Omnipotent God. I stood a moment at the door thinking of all that had come to me since I went out at it, and something welled up in my heart, a something which I did not at first understand, and then I realized that it was gratitude. 'Father, I thank thee for this,' I said. I spoke the words aloud; I think I had never addressed God in that way before. I felt better. I went in and sat down by the table to read my Bible. I turned to the concordance and began to search for passages that told of God's love, of his care, and of peace. I went to bed repeating the promise, 'My peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you.'

"Next morning I awoke with a strange, new feeling of lightness, a feeling as of a burden slipping from me. I had some difficulty in realizing that the events of the night before had been real, but I soon remembered all and as I began to

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dress I kept repeating, 'My expectation is from him.'

"Of course I had my dark days, days when the old, sickening fear would lay hold upon me and I would turn faint and dizzy with the thought of 'What *are* we going to do? What will become of us?' At such times I always thought of what my good friend had said about tearing down the blinds of doubt and fear that shut God out, and I would almost hear him say, 'Be still and *know* that I am God.'

"I shall never forget the look on Tom's face as he came rushing in one day, calling to me, 'Mother, mother, we've had an answer to our prayers. Mr. Montgomery has to go to Denver next week to be gone all week and he wants me to stay with Mrs. Montgomery and do his chores. He says he'll give me two dollars and a half. That will buy Ted's shoes and leave a dollar toward mine. I'll scratch around somewhere and get the other half-dollar. Mother, God *does* hear prayers.'

"'Yes, dear,' I answered, 'God does hear prayers. It was only because mother did not know how to ask aright that he had not heard before. He answered your prayer for help that very same night when he sent the dear old lady to show mother the way.'

"When Tom came home at the end of the week

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he brought besides his money a roll of butter and two boxes of honey that Mrs. Montgomery sent me. 'Look, mother, we've had another answer,' he said as he set the basket on the table.

" 'We had an answer while you were gone,' cried the children, dancing excitedly around Tom. 'We had an answer too. Mother, may we show it to him?'

"I took down the key and we all went out to the smokehouse and delighted Tom with the sight of a fine quarter of beef some cowboy friends had sent us.

"On Sunday we had a 'spread'—meat and butter, both on the table at once, not to speak of honey! I got out my good tablecloth in honor of the occasion and we all dressed in our best clothes. I had never been to town since Will's death. I had not dressed in anything but my everyday work clothes and put my hair up in the easiest way. To-day I did my hair with care, put on a gray cashmere dress, a collar and a bit of ribbon at my throat, and my own children scarcely knew me. I suppose if I had dropped down among a gathering of people, they would have thought I had decamped from the ark, so antiquated was my costume; but my children thought I looked beautiful, and I felt better, so what mattered it?

"Mr. Montgomery always went over to the

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town on Saturday morning, and Tom frequently went with him to do an errand at the store or to get the mail. I promised him that on the following Saturday he might go and get the shoes. He kept hoping that in some way he could earn the other fifty cents needed in order to buy the two pairs of shoes. But no way presented itself.

"On Friday night I made up my mind that the child should have the shoes; I took out the little store of dollars, and this time I counted them—there were ten. I took out one and put the rest away. When Tom was ready to start I gave him the dollar, saying, 'Take fifty cents for your shoes, get twenty-five cents' worth of sugar, and a quarter of a pound of tea. There will be five cents left and with that you may buy some candy; get lemon or cream stick candy.' Tom looked at me as though he feared I were losing my senses.

" 'Do you honestly mean it, mother?' he asked. They had not had any candy since the Christmas before, and then only a penny's worth each. Tom knew that I was so frantically holding on to those few dollars that I had almost felt it a tempting of Providence to spend any for stamps and envelopes even to write to Aunt Hester; and as for tea, it had been more than two years since I bought my last quarter of a pound. It was no wonder that the child hesitated and then asked again, 'Can you spare the dollar, mother?'

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“ ‘Yes, dear, I can spare it perfectly well. If we are to trust God to care for us, we must begin by using for our present needs such means as we already have. It was not until she used of the oil and the meal that she already had that God sent the increase to the widow in Elijah’s time, you remember. Of course you children do not really *need* the candy, but it will give you a great deal of pleasure; I shall like you to have it and I think God will too.’

“Tom picked up the dollar and put it in his pocketbook with his own money, saying as he did so, ‘It seems good to hear you talk that way about God, mother, just like he was a Friend.’

“ ‘He *is* a Friend, Tom, the best *Friend* we have,’ I answered as I kissed him good-by.

“ ‘You can easily imagine there was rejoicing in that house when Tom returned bringing the shoes and the candy. The excitement was at so high a pitch that it was some time before Tom ran to look in his coat pocket, exclaiming, ‘I got a letter for you, mother, but it isn’t from Aunt Hester. It’s from somewhere in Massachusetts. Do you know anybody there?’

“ ‘Not that I now remember,’ I answered; ‘but let me see the letter. Perhaps there may be a mistake in the address.’

“ ‘O, no, there isn’t; it’s as plain as can be; but here it is.’

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"I took the letter and sat down at the window. There could be no mistake. It was for me. When I opened it what do you think fell out? Yes, it was money—a check for one thousand dollars made payable to me; there could be no mistake. The signature was Archibald Beach. I knew no Archibald Beach. I turned to the last page of the letter—the signature was the same. But I had no thought to waste on signatures. I knew that by whosoever hand it was sent, it was from our Father that the gift came. 'O, children, we are rich, rich. God has answered all our prayers for years to come,' I said as I folded the check and put it safely away in the bottom of the trunk.

"When the excitement subsided I took the letter again. It told me that the writer, a lawyer, employed by the late Mrs. St. Clair Adams, was carrying out the instructions in his late client's will by hereby remitting draft for one thousand dollars for kindness and services rendered twenty years ago.

"Twenty years—Mrs. St. Clair Adams—yes, I remembered her as a lady who came to Aunt Hester's place seeking health when I was a young girl. I had waited upon her, carried up her meals, posted her letters, run her errands, in fact, done what I could to make her comfortable. I had occasionally heard from her through Aunt Hester, but she had not mentioned her in several

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years, and the thought of her had gone from my memory.

"Since that day I have tried to remember that no matter how dark the *seeming* night, I have but to keep close to God—he knows the way. It looks presumptuous for an everyday ranch-woman, like me to be sitting here making bold to instruct one so much more learned in sacred things. But forgive me if I presume; it is only that I love you and am interested in your happiness, and I have gone through the struggle and *know*. O, Mrs. Sherwood, of ourselves we can do *nothing*, but we can do *all* things through Christ which strengtheneth us."

AUGUST 10. I came home to X—— a new woman. I had seen a great light. I came with but one desire, the desire to live the life. I did not want to talk about it even to Charles until he should see that I was different, and should ask me to tell him of the experiences that had come to me. But when I saw him—was it because the scales had fallen from my eyes?—he seemed to know and understand, and I felt that together we were starting out upon a higher plane.

JUNE 20, 1905. We are going out of the pastorate! What a strange feeling of weakness creeps over me, tingling down to my very fingertips, as I write the words! How often I have wondered how I should feel when this time

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should come! We used to feel that it must come when we had passed the time of efficient service, when no church any longer needed us. But it has come to us in a different way in the call to what we feel to be a broader field—not a higher or a happier one.

A few weeks since Charles received a letter asking him to let his name come before the trustees of W—— College as a candidate for the presidency. We said nothing of the matter to the girls; they both finished high school this month and are looking hopefully toward college, and we feared that they, in their enthusiasm, might bias our judgment.

After they had gone up to their room we went out on the porch and looked at the matter in all its phases and finally decided it was a call to more usefulness. We feel that to be at the head of a broadly religious institution, such as W—— will give us an opportunity of accomplishing vastly more than we could hope to do in the pastorate. We see in the wave of religious unrest which is sweeping over the country a great spiritual awakening; the people, old and young, refuse longer to be fed upon creeds and platitudes; they resent being handed a stone when heart-hungry; they have cried out for bread. In our Father's house is bread and to spare—they who minister must know not only where it is to

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be found, but also how to break and give to the multitude that they may eat.

Educated youth must have a great part to play in breaking to humanity this bread of life. We are anxious to be among those who shall bear a part in training the leaders. Nevertheless, we are leaving the old life with many regrets.

A sinking of the heart comes over me when I realize that I shall miss the friendly interest which people have taken in me, not for any worth of my own oftentimes, but simply because I was the minister's wife, an interest which in my younger days I sometimes resented and called "meddling." I see so many things differently from the way I saw them then that, now that I am going out, I wish I might lift up my voice to both the laity and the clergy, saying, "Come, let us reason together."

To all who are ministered unto I would say, Your pastor and his family are just plain flesh-and-blood people, like yourself and all the world; the things that *you* need, *they* need also. Do not feel that your duty has been discharged when you have contributed to the physical needs—don't wait until they are worn out with heart-hunger and loneliness before you "warm to them." Try a little human sympathy *now*. Don't expect unreasonable or impossible things of your pastor; don't *demand* anything of his wife—you pay her

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no salary. Don't criticize his children—they are probably no worse than your own and those of your neighbor. There is no particular reason why they should be *better*.

To the clergy and their families, of all denominations, who have been our contemporaries and friends, I say good-by with an aching heart. I shall miss your love, your understanding sympathy, and I often wonder if into this new life into which we are going there will come the sense of comradeship that we have known in this.

My comrades, continue to "count your blessings," to look for the "silver linings," and, above all, continue steadfast in the faith—faith in God and in your fellow man.

To the wife of the young minister just starting out on the way, my heart goes out as that of a mother to her child. To her I would say so *many* things, which when I have summed them all up read: "Be brave, be patient, be cheerful; but, above all—be cheerful." Cheerfulness is the secret of perpetual youth. Don't waste any time in wondering what is to become of yourself and your family when your husband reaches "the dead line"—bless your hearts! some ministers are *born* on the other side of the "dead line," it would seem, and others never reach it no matter what the "family record" says about years.

If you've been so unfortunate as to marry one

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of the former, you'll have to make him over; but if, as I hope, you have one of the latter, you will have but to help him realize that "The kingdom of heaven is within." One of the dominant "new thoughts" in religion to-day is, "A man is as old as he *thinks* he is, and no older," which is not *new* at all, but merely another rendering of the *old* truth, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

I am sure we feel as young as when we started for Patricia twenty years ago. I suppose we *look* some older, and we have some more experience, though Charles still looks sufficiently youthful to cause strangers to exclaim in astonishment when told that he is the father of two young lady daughters. He is down in the furnace room putting away some tools. I hear him this minute singing, "Swing low, Sweet Chariot," stopping off abruptly every now and then to whistle a bit of "Old Black Joe," just for all the world as he used to do away back in the old days in Pleasant Center when he went down to make a fire in the kitchen stove and start the breakfast. I haven't a doubt he'll want to join the glee club and play on the football team, but, of course, I shall not let him—some one will have to preserve the dignity of the family.

As for me—well, I'm having the "robin's-egg-blue" made over to wear to the president's recep-

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tion, instead of giving it to Mary, as I planned fifteen years ago.

Yes, my dear, if you want your husband to succeed, help him to keep young in spirit. Live in the *now*; don't wait till you come to the large church to begin to enjoy your life. Take this bit of truth from one who knows—there is as much happiness, as much opportunity to do good, as much money saved in the little country town as in the city church.

Don't look backward with regret, nor forward with too much anticipation, but

Build a little fence of love around to-day,
Fill it in with loving work and therein *stay*.

So soon as you have hung your sunbonnet behind the kitchen door in the new parsonage let that place be home, and remember, that comparisons are odious. And then—*expect* good things. There is no greater truth than "What ye *seek* ye *find*."

To the hundreds of people who during these twenty years have stood to us in the capacity of parishioners—to you my heart goes out in gratitude for all that you have been to me and mine; you have shared our griefs as well as our joys, you have ministered unto our spirits as well as unto our bodies.

If I could have a wish, it would be that you

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might all pass before me in line and that I might take you each by the hand and call you each by name. Perhaps I could not quite do that, but I know that I should recognize each face as the face of a friend. God bless you! Good-by!

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